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CONTROVERSIALIST

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JESUS

AS A

Controversialist

Nathaniel S. Haynes, A. M.

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INTRODUCTION

Farrar says, "A languid controversialist will always meet with a languid tolerance," and it is just as true that a strenuous controversialist will always meet with a strenuous intolerance. Perusal of this little volume will create the conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was a constant, persistent, strenuous and aggressive controversialist, and will help one to understand the bitterness of the intolerance of Scribes and Pharisees, and all those whose errors and vices he so constantly controverted and exposed. The author helps us to an instructive view of the wide range and varied methods of the controversies which Jesus took up with the propagators of error. He allowed no theories, systems or customs which have to do with human life or destiny to go unchallenged, nor was there anything languid in his manner or method of attack.

No one will be a controversialist of any kind who does not have a clear appreciation of the

value of truth, and of his own responsibility in maintaining and propagating it. No one will be more than a languid controversialist who cares more for tolerance than for truth. Only he who feels the infinite life-giving value of truth, and the fatal folly of error, coupled with a deep sense of his responsibility and duty in view of their irrepressible conflict, will be such a controversialist as was Jesus Christ. He could at any moment have allayed the spirit of intolerance which hounded him, and have stayed the hand of persecution which at last nailed him to the cross, if he had consented to "a conspiracy of silence." When Pilate suggested a way of escape by compromising truth, Jesus answered, with the cross only a few hours ahead, "For this cause I came into the world, *that I might bear witness to the truth.*"

The only antidote for evil is good, and the only antidote for error is truth. The world is so crowded with evil and error that he who would advance good and truth must be both a reformer and a controversialist. Peter and John and Paul, and the rest, understood this, and would not be forced into silence by any threats or punishments. Bearing witness to the truth in this

error-ridden world is a business of strenuous belligerency; not of "dignified silence" or "masterly inactivity."

In presenting Jesus as the most persistent, alert, resourceful and masterful controversialist of all ages, the author of this volume has done our generation a distinct and valuable service. Pilate cynically intimated that truth was such an illusive or elusive thing that no one could be sure about it, and that, anyhow, it was not worth contending for, much less dying for. Jesus did not so think. But there are those who seem to think that truth will take care of itself, and needs no strenuous advocacy—no *controversy*. As things are, no one but a fool would expect the establishment of righteousness to involve no conflict with evil. If he so thinks, let him try his hand at the temperance work, or any of the real reforms of our day, and if not incurable, he will be rid of that folly. It is equally absurd to suppose that the propagation of truth involves no controversy with error, nor, in the light of the example of Jesus, can any of his disciples think it possible to speak the truth without "shaming the devil" and terribly enraging him.

“Truth is mighty and will prevail,” and

“Truth crushed to earth will rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers,
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies amid her worshipers,”

but wilt thou know, O cowardly man, that truth will prevail only as it is championed by its defenders and progagators, and that error will be wounded, if at all, by some controversial tongue?

Let it be said again that, in this true portraiture of Jesus as the most masterful and strenuous of all controversialists—constantly “bearing witness to the truth,” and as constantly wounding error, the author of these pages has rendered us all a unique service, and one that is altogether timely. It will not be necessary to point out to discerning readers the literary merits of the work—its simplicity of style, its intellectual candor, its conciseness and temperance of statement, with its wealth of example and illustrations, drawn from the work and teaching of Jesus himself.

B. J. RADFORD.

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Jesus as a Controversialist

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT TEACHER.

Jesus of Nazareth is the world's great Teacher. His position is singular and his place unique. The passing centuries bear witness to his ever-increasing influence among men. As his precepts are embodied in human lives civilization advances to nobler ideals and higher types. Great thinkers are attracted to his imperial personality and philosophers pause to reflect upon his wonderful words. How are these facts to be accounted for? What is there in the message of this man that elicits the tireless attention and enlarging interest of the passing generations?

This Teacher is the one revealer of spiritual truth. He makes God known to men as our Father. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal

him.” “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” And he assures us of the profound concern and measureless, passionate love of God for his wayward children of earth. He so loved the world as to give us his son.

He makes known to us our origin—that we are the offspring of God who is the Father of our spirits; we are created by infinite power and made in his divine image. He reveals to us our destiny. Man is an inhabitant of eternity, and hence of priceless worth. The life that is now ours is introductory and preparatory to that which is to come. A human being divinely endowed with conscious personality, is as endless as the eternal throne. He tells us of the mystery of our redemption from evil. Concerning the forgiveness of sins nature is as mute as the mountains, as voiceless as the stars. Because he suffered and died and rose again repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations. He makes known to us the fact of human brotherhood, for “God made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.” In the Creator’s purpose all men are brothers, not enemies; friends, not fighters, of one another;

therefore is the mutual obligation imposed upon all, "that all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them"—that every one should love his neighbor as he loves himself. He brings to us the highest ideals of human life, the sublimest considerations for a fellowship in suffering and service, and the weightiest motives leading to the cheerful discharge of all duties.

This Teacher has made known to us a divinely planned and purposed order in human society which he calls the kingdom of God. The first word of his public teaching was, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and his last words, spoken just before his return to the Father, were concerning this kingdom, with the aim of correcting the erroneous conceptions of his followers. The kingdom of God is the right order of all human affairs in which the will of Jesus is recognized as the supreme law. This institution was the dominant thought in all his teaching—the one supreme thing in which all that he said and did centered. It was the focus of his mission, and of all things that he commanded his followers to do. Its principles are the absolute

and ultimate spiritual truth that he revealed, its dynamic power his own Divine personality, its spirit a race-embracing philanthropy. In it men may learn the lesson that the Teacher repeats again and again, namely, the material things of life should be subordinated to spiritual concerns—the former are simply the scaffolding of the soul, the latter build “a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.” Not long ago an able jurist said, “I believe that the teachings of Jesus contain those principles that must solve all of the social and economic problems of our time.” If this conclusion is true, then the sayings of this Teacher must be filled with a wisdom that is more than human. Assuredly it recalls the prophecies that relate to the reign of the Prince of Peace: “Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end;” his rule will break in pieces all evil organizations that perpetuate injustice and administer oppression until they become like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor.

Jesus fully communicated the will of God to men in “all things that pertain unto life and godliness,” so that by his instructions

one "may be completely furnished unto every good work." He further disclosed the purpose of a general resurrection, both of the just and the unjust, when he shall be manifested, "and we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is;" and also the final judgment of the great day, when every one shall give account of himself to God, and the separation of the obedient from the disobedient—the one to the fullness of joy, the other to the outer darkness. These revelations will engage the most serious attention of men as long as they shall live and love and suffer and die.

Not the matter of the Teacher's discourses only, but his manner and methods as well, attracted the attention and enlisted the interest of all classes of the people. His manner was the perfection of naturalness. Simplicity characterized most of his sayings. He used words that were continually employed by the people. He spoke of the earth and the sky, of land and sea, of deserts and clouds, of hills and gulfs, of lakes and swollen streams, of mountains and plains, of the moon and the stars, of rocks and stones, of earthquakes and

lightning, of sand and soils, of winter and summer, of the east and the west, of the south wind and showers, of salt and the ground, of day and night, midnight and midday, of morning and evening, of light and darkness, of times and hours, of sunshine and rain, of winds and floods, of cold and heat, of the air and the weather, of fire and dust, of famines and pestilence, of water and wine, of silver and gold, of fields and farms, of seeds and sowers, of wheat and tares, of harvests and reapers, of grasses and trees, of vines and bushes, of roots and branches, of flowers and fruits, of leaves and blades, of grapes and thorns, of figs and thistles, of the ear and the full corn in the ear; also of fish and fishermen, of birds and beasts of burden, of sheep and shepherds, of lambs and kids, of serpents and doves, of wolves and foxes, of dogs and hogs, of gnats and camels, of cocks and eagles, of hens and chickens, of eggs and goats, of vipers and scorpions, of holes and nests, of moth and rust; and of the human body, of the head and feet, of hands and heel, of blood and bones, of the stomach and side, of heart and womb, of faces and mouths, of eyes and

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and truth-speakers, of thieves and robbers, of harlots and "the son of perdition," of weddings and funerals, and of heirs and inheritances; and further, of hunger and thirst, of eating and drinking, of fasting and feasting, of sobriety and drunkenness, of dinners and suppers, of gluttons and wine bibbers, of patching and sifting, of digging and begging, of sweeping and dusting, of sewing and mending, of plowing and feeding, of borrowing and lending, of binding and loosing, of debts and payments, of the image and superscription on a Roman coin, of oaths and tithes, of memorials and ambassages, of mocking and scourging, of sackcloth and ashes, of wailing and gnashing teeth, of dancing and lamenting, of laughing and mourning, of music and the many mansions, and of kisses and tears; and finally, of people and "this world," of scribes and elders, of priests and Levites, of heathen and publicans, of guides and magistrates, of eunuchs and tormentors, of rulers and governors, of judges and sheriffs, of kings and queens, of sickness and health, of profits and losses, of fatigue and rest, of bondage and ransom, of sleep and visions, of traditions and

God's commandments, of travail and anguish, of joy and sorrow, of tribulation and triumph, of death and life, and with absolute assurance of the life everlasting. These terms were employed to communicate the knowledge of the origin, nature, principles and growth of the kingdom of "heaven, and the right relations, duties and destinies of responsible human beings. It is therefore not surprising that great multitudes followed him everywhere, and that "the common people heard him gladly."

It is plain that the Teacher ordinarily spoke seriously and sometimes solemnly, but there are evidences that he sometimes introduced humor into his discourses. To the self-appointed critics of human weakness he said, you see the mote, the small splinter, in your brother's eye, but not the beam, the big stake or log, in your own eye, and you are asking to pull the little splinter out of his eye and let the log stay in your own eye. "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the log out of thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the little splinter out of thy brother's eye." This satire must have appealed to the ludicrous in those who heard it, and they

doubtless smiled broadly thereat. When rebuking the Pharisees for their punctilious observance of the law's precepts about little things while they left undone its requirements of far weightier matters, he said, "Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat and swallow the camel!" The former was the smallest and the latter the largest animal known to the Jews, and both were unclean. Jesus represents these formalists as straining their wine lest perchance they might swallow a gnat, while a camel stood in their individual cups, which they swallowed without any qualms of conscience! What a laughable picture indeed! On his way to Jerusalem, when Jesus was passing through the dominion of Herod Antipas, certain Pharisees said to him, "Get thee out and push on, for Herod would fain kill thee." He answered them, "Go and say to that fox." This is the sole recorded word of contempt that the Teacher ever spoke. With his keen insight into the real character of that monster, it was befitting irony, for Herod was the cunning, crafty and cruel enemy of all good.

Of his gestures in his personal talks and

his public discourses nothing is written except the "he lifted up his eyes on his disciples," and that "he lifted up his hands and blessed them." But in all his sayings he doubtless suited actions to his words. Whatever natural motions and movements would emphasize and impress his words he likely used. In replying to those who tried to ensnare him by their questions about the right treatment of an adulteress, Jesus twice stooped down and twice with his fingers wrote on the ground. The scene was intensely dramatic. Not that Jesus was an "actor," far from it; but that his words and his gestures were perfectly united, and hence oratorically most pleasing. Standing in the night by the fire of coals in the court of the high priest's palace, as Jesus was led past, he "turned and looked upon Peter,"—then the inconstant disciple "went out and wept bitterly."

The throngs that "trode one upon another" to hear the words of this Teacher were doubtless attracted by his voice also. As in all else in this also he was perfect. The rarest thing in all the world is a charming voice. Of beautiful souls there are many—of beautiful

voices, few. It would be incongruous to think that there was anything harsh or monotonous in his vocal utterances. He spoke often and sometimes at length in the open air to great crowds; hence his voice must have been strong and of unusual volume and compass. There was a melliflence in his tones, a winsomeness in his oral expressions, and an unmistakable sympathy in his accents that reached the soul-depths of his hearers. The people wondered at the words of grace that proceeded out of his mouth. When he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," it was with a tenderness of tone and a compassion of appeal that sent the invitation into the heart. When he said to the religious leaders of his people, "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" the frightful awe awakened in their minds must have echoed, "How?" Jesus held his emotions in perfect control and always in even balance with his thoughts and words; so when he uttered his pathetic words of deep sorrow over Jerusalem, his lamentation must have been impressive beyond description. His was

the only absolutely perfect voice that has ever fallen upon mortal ears amid all the babel sounds of time.

In his methods of teaching Jesus recognized and followed the natural laws of the human mind.

He made use of man's ability to reason, and in this he was the prince of all controversialists. From the facts given in the four gospels it is plain that he used arguments; indeed, the impartial reader is led to think that he liked an argument; not for its own sake, but man being endowed by his Creator with the logical faculty, Jesus recognized its function and value. It is the primary and fundamental method for the discovery, elucidation and confirmation of truth. It is the good angel of all human progress, leading to higher ideals and nobler living. Nothing is more common in men's daily affairs than comparison by discussing and discussion by comparison—in education, in politics, in science, in history, in art, in literature and in philosophy. Why should it be deprecated or even depreciated in those higher things that immediately concern the soul? It was not by the great Teacher.

He appealed to the heart. The cry of the soul for God is as natural as the cry of a little child for expressions of love. Heart-hunger is as universal as our race.

"Oh, that I knew where I might find him!
That I might come even to his seat!"

His disciples witnessed the roaring winds and tumultuous waves obedient to his commands, and all forms of human suffering flee away at his word like bats before the morning light. When this majestic man said to them, "I must suffer many things, and be killed by my enemies at Jerusalem, and the third day be raised up," their hearts were deeply and strangely stirred. The tragedy of the cross is heaven's supreme appeal to the wayward children of time.

He also appealed to the conscience. He recognized and used this universal monitor. "He that is without sin among you, let *him* first cast a stone at her;" and they went out one by one, beginning from the eldest even unto the last. Some of his charming and incomparable word pictures illustrate the same thing, as the parable of the Prodigal Son and the Unmerciful Servant.

He awakened men's fears. This was not a small element in his ministry. He himself in the days of his flesh, in his own mysterious and deepest experiences, was "heard for his godly fear." He upbraided the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done because they repented not. And he warned his friends to fear God rather than men. The records attest the fact that Jesus did not make much use of denunciatory preaching—this type was the minimum of his ministry—but let the fact be recognized that he did use this style of instruction. It reached its climax in the hot and withering words recorded in Matthew, twenty-third chapter, where the seven woes culminated in his unanswerable question. But these awful words came out of a heart that was the tenderest that ever throbbed. They were immediately followed by his compassionate lament over Jerusalem, that was more divine and impassioned than the sobbing cry of David for his son Absalom.

The religion of our Lord is essentially, basically and vitally militant. It is his sovereign purpose to subject all things unto himself. Hence it is the first and chief business

of every one of his disciples in all the earth and in every age, to go into all the world and preach his gospel to every creature; and this service must be carried forward until every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Tremendous tasks challenge the faith, the courage and the fidelity of his people. After nineteen centuries one-half of our race is still enslaved and debased by false systems. And among nominally Christian people conditions are often a travesty on his self-surrendered and beautiful life. His followers are impelled to antagonize all errors and evils until truth and liberty, universal intelligence and equal justice, brotherhood and benevolence shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Controversy for its own sake upon secular subjects may be desirable as a mental gymnasium, but on questions pertaining to our holy religion it is seriously objectionable and altogether out of place. Such discussions diminish reverence and tend to impair and destroy the spirit of devotion. Its spirit has very many times been ugly and unchristian. It has frequently so filled attention that the follower has lost sight

of his Leader, and it has so warped spiritual vision that its participants have become unsympathetic theological dogmatists, rather than Christly souls contending in love for the truth as it is in Jesus, and for "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." Its wrong aim has led into the way of ignorance and sinfulness and turned far away from the divine Spirit.

The purposes of the Master in all his controversies were, the affirmation of his own personal and inseparable alignment with the eternal principles of righteousness, the elimination of errors from the minds and hearts of people, and the planting of spiritual truth therein. It was not possible that any of his discourses should have had the savor of uncharitableness or the sting of bitterness; for prayer to the Father was the breath of his life and love for men his consuming passion. In his boundless service he gave himself up for sick bodies and sicker souls. With a deathless devotion that rose superior to unequalled agonies, for love's sake, he died of a broken heart in that dark hour that was the nadir of the centuries.

CHAPTER II.

CONTROVERSIES WITH WICKED SPIRITS.

1. *With Satan.*

It is a striking fact that upon the threshold of his public ministry our Lord was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He was subjected to the assaults of evil in all points like as we are, that, as a Son he should learn obedience by the things which he suffered, and as our high priest, he might be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. The approach of Satan was most adroit and cunning. "If thou are the Son of God." Satan knew that he was, and that the destiny of our race hung upon the issue of that attack. The force of a temptation is measured by the degree of desire awakened and the concealment of the sinfulness of the proposed act. Satan's threefold assault was through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. After Jesus had

fasted forty days, the tempter said to him, "Prove yourself to be the Son of God by turning these stones into bread, and thereby satisfy your imperative bodily need." No, answered Jesus, for it is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The devil's second approach was through the lust of the eyes, "Cast thyself down from the pinnacle of the temple;" but this was met by the words, "Again it is written." The third attack was through the pride of life. "All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." This Jesus foiled by the words, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written." In each instance the desire awakened was intense and the wrong of the proposed act most craftily concealed. These temptations of Jesus were representative. He hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. All impulses to evil in men come in one of these three forms. We are enticed through the flesh or its hungers, through intellect or the love of display, or through the pride of life or worldly ambition.

It is significant that Jesus did not enter into a formal discussion with the tempter, yet sharply controverted his contentions. Without doubt our Lord could have vanquished his adversary in a philosophical argument, but in each instance he defeated him by a direct appeal to the written word of God. This is the only easy and safe course for his followers in our temptations. Satan knows, through his own experience, the force and power of God's word, and he is triumphantly resisted when any one thrusts into him the Sword of the Spirit.

2. *With Demons.*

At the time of our Lord's advent the empire of darkness had spread over the earth like a universal death-pall. Gentile nations had sunk down into unspeakable immoralities, inhuman cruelties and deep despair. God's chosen people had lost his thought and spirit and were engaged with empty formalisms. The race was wellnigh a festering ooze of evil. Malign spirits from the pit of darkness attacked and possessed many people.

By a demon the Jews in our Lord's time

meant the spirit of a human being who had lived wickedly upon the earth and had died in impenitence and sin. As these people had yielded themselves to Satan through their earth lives, so they continued under his dominion in the unseen world. Ofttimes he sent them back into this life to afflict people. Jesus accepted the current conception and use of the word "demon," and used it without modification or explanation. The witnesses of our Lord's beneficent power recite some impressive instances of his defeats of these tormentors.

In the synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath day Jesus met a man with an unclean spirit, who cried out with a loud voice, "Ah! what have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? Art thou come to destroy us?" Jesus said, "Hold thy peace and come out of him." And the demon, having thrown the man down without hurt in the midst of the assembly, came out of him, to the amazement of the people.

A pitiable picture is that of the two demons whose habitation was in the tombs, who, as the Master approached, cried out, "What

have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? I adjure by God torment us not. Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" And always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, they were crying out and cutting themselves with stones. One of these possessed men had been oftentimes bound with fetters and chains, which he had rent asunder and broken in pieces. When asked his name, he said, "My name is Legion, for we are many." But at the Master's word the legion left him so that the man sat down clothed and in his right mind.

A father brought his son, who was similarly afflicted, to Jesus, saying, "My son hath a dumb spirit, it rends him, and he foams, and grinds his teeth and pines away. He has been thus afflicted since he was a child, and oftentimes it hath cast him both into the fire and into the water." To this tearful appeal Jesus responded, "Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee come out of him, and enter no more into him."

The demons afflicted others with blindness and loss of speech and in various ways. The extent of this power to scourge many people

may be surmised from the report of the seventy disciples upon their return to the Master, "Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name." The method of the demons in meeting Jesus was just the opposite of their master, Satan—he began by casting doubt upon the Divine Sonship of our Lord; they bawled out publicly on occasion, "Thou art the Son of God." But Jesus suffered the demons not to speak, because they knew him to be the Christ. He refused and prohibited testimony, although true, from such a source, and further denied the right of those demons to possess and afflict human beings.

CHAPTER III.

CONTROVERSIES WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

1. *The Sermon on the Mountain.*

With the aim of correcting the erroneous impressions and conclusions of his disciples, Jesus frequently entered into controversy with them, often very briefly, sometimes quite extendedly. The inimitable precepts of our Lord's sermon on the mountain are well considered to be highly spiritual. And yet two of the three chapters that hold the sermon are distinctly controversial.

In it he first speaks of human happiness—that *ignis fatuus* of all human hearts. Ordinarily, people connect happiness with conditions and circumstances. Jesus cut this error out by the roots in his beatitudes, for seven of the nine are of character. One's happiness is found in what he *is*, not in what he *has*. Blessedness for men is not in pride and arrogance, not in wealth and learning, not

in place and power and the world's acclaims, but in humility and gentleness, in the heart's hunger for purity before God and right conduct with men, for mercifulness and peaceableness, all of which are elements of true manhood. Even human hate and painful persecutions may bring the supreme joy of martyrdom—the climax of beatific paradox.

The knowledge and grace of his disciples are not primarily for themselves, but the divine light of truth and the influences of saved lives are to win men to the Father through their good works.

Jesus protested against the empty formalism of the religious life of his people, and particularly against the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were counted as models of propriety and correct deportment.

The ideas that were then prevalent among the Jews on the questions of anger among brethren; censoriousness, adultery, divorce, profane swearing, retaliation toward and hatred of enemies, Jesus attacked directly, and he assured his hearers that persistent disobedience to his superior requirements on these matters would lead them to the torments of hell.

He protested against hypocrisy in almsgiving, in prayer and in fasting, and emphasized the need of right motives and proper conduct. The prevalent ideas about riches and other material cares he sought to supplant with a personal trust in the good Father of all, higher forms of activity and the rewards of eternity.

Thus far the sermon on the mount. And farther it is here noted that Jesus comes to a second standard of authority, namely, his own Divine right to command. "I say unto you" occurs seven times in this sermon. In his controversy with Satan, Jesus appealed solely to the written word, but in this discourse he reaches the second source of ultimate appeal in all religious controversy. These two, and these only, are met throughout his ministry. With the death of specially inspired men our Lord ceased to speak directly to human beings; hence we are shut up to the written word of God in the decision of every fundamental spiritual inquiry. "To the law and to the testimony—if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them."

2. *Unready Disciples.*

There were three men who said to Jesus that they would like to "follow him." To the first, a scribe and a disciple, Jesus said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven lodging places, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Follow me if you will, but know that I can now give you neither entertainment nor material reward. To the second man, also a disciple—and it is conjectured that this man was James or John, one of Zebedee's sons—Jesus said, "Follow me." The man replied, "I will, but permit me first to bury my father." Jesus replied, "Leave the dead to bury their dead, but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God." The business of our Lord is first and his command is supreme, and to these even the sacred duties of filial affection must be subordinated. The third man said he would follow Jesus provided he was permitted to first go home and tell his people good-bye. Jesus answered, "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." Acceptable service in God's

kingdom with distracted attention or a divided heart can not be. All things that hinder one's progress in the Master's service must stand aside.

3. The Littleness of Their Faith.

Crossing the sea of Galilee from the eastern to the western shore with his disciples, Jesus, reclining in the stern of the boat, with his head resting upon a pillow, fell into a deep sleep. Soon there came a great tempest upon the sea, beating the waves into the boat until it was full. In apparent jeopardy and great fear, his disciples awoke him, saying, "Master, Master, we perish! Carest thou not that we perish?" And he, brushing sleep from his eyelids, said to them, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" They had already seen enough of his power and his kindness to fully assure them of their safety. Then to the rushing winds and the rolling waves he said, "Peace, be still." The wind ceased and there was a great calm. Impressed with his sublime power, they exclaimed, "What manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

4. *Feeding the Multitude.*

When Jesus heard of the cruel death of John the Baptist he retired with his disciples into a country place to rest and to pray. The people also were deeply moved by this mournful deed, and sought the Teacher's presence. Many were probably also moving toward Jerusalem in view of the approaching Passover. Jesus had compassion on the multitude, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; so he welcomed them, healing their sick and speaking to them of the kingdom of God until the sun sank low in the sky on that day. Then his disciples, with the over-anxious Philip as spokesman, came to him, saying, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and country round about, and lodge and get provisions." Jesus answered, "Give ye them to eat." Philip replied, "Thirty-four dollars' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little." Jesus said, "Where may enough food be bought? How many loaves have ye? Go and see." Then Peter—it may be with a vague surmise of what might possibly be done—reported,

“There is a lad here who hath five barley loaves and two fishes, but what are they among so many?” The response to that inquiry was this: About five thousand hungry men ate and were filled, besides women and children; and twelve baskets full of broken pieces were gathered up. Jesus here cut short the discussion by a kindly expression of his divine power—one of the most obvious of all his mighty deeds.

5. *The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and of Herod.*

Wishing to hook ineradicably into the minds of his disciples the consciousness of the hurtful effects of the evil teachings of his enemies, Jesus said, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees and of Herod.” The disciples reasoned among themselves and concluded that the occasion of their Teacher’s admonition was, “because we have taken no bread” for this trip. Then his words to them were direct and incisive, “O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread? Do ye not yet perceive, neither understand? Have ye your heart hardened? Having eyes

see ye not? and having ears hear ye not? and do ye not remember?" Reminding them of the two occasions on which great multitudes had been directly fed by his sovereign bounty, he asked, "Do ye not yet understand?" And they said that they understood that he had cautioned them, not against the leaven used in making bread, but against the *teachings* of his enemies. The Teacher was deeply concerned for his disciples, that they should be on their guard against religious error that so often wears the semblance of truth. When held and disseminated by leaders, it quietly and effectively permeates great numbers of people to their injury and ruin. The source of the leaven about which Jesus then talked was hypocrisy, which fruited in Pharisaic formalism, Sadducean rationalism and the unprincipled and vicious politics of the Herodians.

6. *Mistaken Conceptions of His Vicarious
Sufferings and Death.*

In nothing were the friends of our Lord further astray than in their conceptions of the nature of his mission and the means by which he should accomplish it. At an early period of

his ministry he had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;" "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;" and later, "No sign shall be given to this evil and adulterous generation, but the sign of the prophet Jonah"—but all these were then obscure and understood by neither friend nor foe. When their faith had grown into a measure of strength he began to teach them plainly that he must go to Jerusalem, "and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Three times afterward he told them of his passion and death, and while they were exceeding sorry and did not understand it, they were afraid to ask him. But they could not harmonize such experiences with their lofty and material conceptions of the Messiah and his kingdom. Such an ending of his career would frustrate all their hope, and, indeed, clearly prove to them that he was not the promised Messiah. Very naturally, therefore, Peter blurted out, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall never be unto thee." Then, with an earnest look fixed upon his dis-

ciple, Jesus answered Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art a stumbling-block unto me; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." This rebuke was given with vehemence; for nothing could more effectively serve Satan than to turn Jesus from the way of the cross. In approaching its black shadow, he needed encouragement, not dissausion. The further apprehension of its mystery by his friends our Lord left to time and events.

Having thus made known the basic principle of his own life, our Lord easily added in plain speech the meaning of discipleship: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." One finds his own life in giving, not in getting, in self-abnegation, not in self-aggrandizement, in bearing a cross, not in striving for a fading crown.

7. Personal Ambition.

Still his disciples persisted in their notion that the Messiah's kingdom would be essen-

tially like others, and that he would be a powerful prince with palaces, honors and emoluments at his disposal. As they walked along the road to Capernaum, they disputed among themselves who should be greatest in this kingdom. As soon as they had entered a house in that city they put the question to Jesus. He replied, "What was it ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" At once they perceived that he had heard their thoughts and saw their hearts. Conscience-smitten and ashamed, they held their peace. They were thinking of large places and great persons, but the reply of Jesus was of the greatness of character. This was the first outbreak of selfishness and strife among the friends of our Lord. Its hateful progeny has followed on and on and on, to the hurt of his people, the immeasurable hindrance of his kingdom and the infinite wounding of his heart. His reply was as tender as it was terrific. First he said, "If any man desire to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." Then he called a little child, and, setting him in the midst of them, said, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise

enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." By simplicity and faith, freedom from selfish ambition and largeness of service, one comes to true greatness in this life. One is little or big by reason of what he is, while the things he has, whether of property or position, are only the incidents and accidents of human life. The latter are temporary and transitory, the former abiding and eternal.

Then Jesus took the little child up into his arms, and, while it nestled in his bosom, he spoke again, "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." All "such" as are full of loving trust, free from evil ambitions and distinctions, gentle and contented as is this little child, are citizens of the spiritual kingdom. But to ensnare one of God's little children by contentions about who shall be greatest is one of the most frightful sins. It were better for such a misleader to have a millstone hung about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. "Woe to that man

through whom the occasion cometh." "It is better for thee to enter into life halt and maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire." "It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." What a warning is this against the awful guilt and peril of misleading, tempting, or ensnaring any one of God's children from the path of truth and righteousness! Against no wrong did the Master speak more solemn words than these. Contentions and strifes that spring from purely selfish impulses and aims are master sins—evident, going before unto judgment.

8. *Narrow Exclusiveness or Sectarian Spirit.*

When Jesus spoke of receiving a child-like person "in his name," John at once recalled an incident of a previous date in his experience, and interrupted the Teacher's discourse by saying, "Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him because he followeth not with us." The jealousy of the disciples had been aroused by that act. This man was not one of their company

and what right had he therefore to such power and prerogative? Jesus answered, "Forbid him not," and gave two reasons therefore: first, this man's work showed him to be a friend of Jesus, and to him the Master had given the power that he was using: and second, this man was engaged in a common service with them and is therefore on our part. As contentious and narrow minded religionists they saw nothing good beyond their own circle. The Master's precept was a stepping-stone to a wider and better view of faith and fraternity.

9. *Forgiveness among Brethren.*

Jesus was giving his disciples a lesson on the right relations that should obtain among his people when Peter inquired, "Lord how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?" And the answer given was this, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but until seventy times seven." In Peter's question there was a fundamental error, namely, that in forgiving he gave up a right which beyond a specific limit he was under no obligation to surrender. In

this he was far from the truth. Into the kingdom of heaven men come through grace and in it they are to exercise grace toward their brethren without limitation. This thought Jesus at once developed, illustrated and impressed in the striking parable of the Unmerciful Servant. A servant of a certain king owed him ten million dollars; but inasmuch as he had nothing with which to pay, his lord commanded that he be sold, with his wife, his children and all that he had, and the proceeds to be applied on the debt. The servant fell down before this lord and so pled for a delay of the sentence that the King was moved with compassion and forgave him the debt. This represents our personal sins against God—in thought, word and deed—and the almost boundless forgiveness he has accorded us through his grace. Then that forgiven servant went out from his lord's presence and met a fellow-servant who owed him seventeen dollars, and gripping him by the throat demanded payment. The unfortunate debtor plead for forbearance, but instead his creditor cast him into prison. This illustrates how comparatively little are our own sins against one an-

other as brethren, and the unforgiving spirit that may be cherished. The conduct of this unmerciful servant moved deeply his companions who reported his severe course to the King, who recalled him. The former compassionate creditor is now the stern judge who rebukes the hard man and delivers him to the tormentors. Our Lord's application is this—"So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." These words should ring like an alarm bell in many a conscience. When divine mercy fails to make men merciful their condition is alarmingly dangerous. The personal illustration of this precept came to its climax in our Lord's life in his prayer on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

10. *The Proper Treatment of an Inhospitable Samaritan Village.*

At the beginning of the closing period of our Lord's earthly career he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. He was not influenced by the intense prejudice of his people against the Samaritans, and hence passed

through their territory whenever it suited him. Messengers were sent before to make ready for his coming; but a village of the Samaritans said, "No, we do not wish the Rabbi of Nazareth to stop here." This was an incivility and a violation of the rights of hospitality that awakened fierce indignation in James and John. They said, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" The Master's reply was a rebuke, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." These "sons of thunder" were yet to learn that man's evil is to be overcome with God's goodness. Christ may be insulted, and his cause injured, but these wrongs can be avenged only by love and pity, gentleness and forbearance. There is here an emphatic condemnation by the sovereign Lord of every form of religious persecution.

11. *Martha's Over-Anxiety About Her Domestic Cares.*

There was one home into which Jesus was ever glad to go, because the three pure and

beautiful souls who owned and occupied it always gave him a cordial welcome. It was to him a restful tarrying-place by reason of a congenial fellowship of loving hearts. In the village of Bethany Martha received him into her house, and for such an honorable guest, thought she, nothing is too good; so she was soon cumbered about much serving. The contemplative Mary sat down before the Rabbi, and, looking up into his wonderful eyes, was at once lost to external conditions in reflecting upon the strange things he said to her. Martha interrupted the conversation by saying, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." His answer was, "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful; for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." The hospitality of Martha was commendable, but just then her mind was filled with anxiety, and she was confused and fussy in her domestic duties. She thought her guest would be better pleased to enjoy a good meal and an inviting place to sleep than to be engaged

for a time in conversation with them. She was mistaken, for the Rabbi now in her home invariably subordinated the material to the spiritual, and always preferred to do that which would help another rather than profit himself. His reproof was so tender and gentle that it purified more than pained the heart of his hostess.

12. *The Cause of the Blindness of a Certain Man.*

The first disciples of our Lord had good reasons to think that bodily disabilities and physical sufferings came as punishments for sins. During the Mosaic dispensation the rewards and penalties of the Israelites were largely material and temporal. It was therefore to be expected that when the elect company came to a man in Jerusalem who was born blind, they should inquire, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Here was a most unfortunate man, suffering a particular and unusual severity—blindness from birth. The disciples reasoned that the man's parents must have been guilty of some particular and very

grievous sin, and the man's own life one of unusual turpitude, because his blindness continued. This was a prevalent superstition of the time that Jesus aimed to correct. "Neither did this man sin nor his parents." In the sins of none of them should you look for the cause of this affliction. It is a mistake to infer great hidden sins from unusual afflictions. "But that the works of God should be made manifest in him." This lifelong blindness was permitted that through its removal "God's works should be made manifest." Farther than to remove the wrong conception in the minds of his disciples Jesus did not enter in this discussion of the causes of human suffering, but simply showed how a better explanation of the evil in the world may be given. "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound."

13. *Incidents Connected with the Recall of Lazarus from Death.*

When the sisters of Lazarus sent word to the Master that his beloved friend was sick, hoping that he might come quickly and heal him, Jesus answered the messenger, "This

sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." As in nature the heavens declare the glory of God, so also in the spiritual realm do those mighty deeds wrought by the Son.

A few days afterward Jesus said, "Let us go into Judea again," but his disciples protested, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" They feared those who had sought to kill him and advised that he keep out of their reach. Their remonstrance against Jesus voluntarily placing himself within the power of his bitter, watchful enemies called out this significant reply, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because the light is not in him." The twelve hours of the day symbolize the periods of human life upon the earth. Men work in the daytime—the sunshine floods the world and our vision is easy and clear. But in the night one is apt to stumble by reason of the darkness. Jesus wished his disciples to understand that he had come to the closing

hours of his "day"—that he saw clearly what was to befall him in its closing hours, and that with good heart they should journey to Jerusalem to accomplish now the Father's will. Ofttimes it has been God's will that the lives of his faithful servants should be cut off by violence, or affliction in a far-away land. Heroic dying at midday is service as acceptable to him as consecrated living far into the evening time. In fulfilling the divine purpose, whether by living or dying, not an hour can be lost.

"Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." This divine conception of the ending of a human life, his disciples, as usual, failed to understand, so they said, "Lord, if he is fallen asleep he will recover." To them the fact of quiet sleep was a proof of returning health. Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe." When they could not understand the language of heaven, he used the terms of earth. He assured them that he could recall his friend from death as easily as he could awaken one

from slumber. How sublime was the declaration of this deliberate purpose! This was the closing and crowning miracle of his ministry—to bless this family that he loved, to confirm the faith of his followers, and to confuse and confound the most captious of his foes. The danger attending his return to Judea was well expressed in the words of Thomas, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” To this speech Jesus made no reply.

When he came near the village of Bethany, Martha, with characteristic activity, met him. Her sorrowing heart sobbed out, “Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died.” Both of the sisters and some of the people reasoned that, had he been present, his love and power must have stayed the approach of death to this friend. “Thy brother shall rise again,” said Jesus. Martha answered, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Then came those mighty words from our Lord that sweetly sound through the centuries with increasing potency, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and be-

lieveth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Jesus is the Living one, therefore has he risen. He is the master of death. Through faith in him his people possess an indefeasible life. Amid the innumerable evidences of the dread destroyer they live because he lives. He imparts divine life by his word through personal trust in himself, and this life, even the dividing of spirit and body, can not interrupt or even impair. The child of God can never die.

14. *Blessing Little Children.*

It was a happy coincidence that just as the Teacher concluded a conversation with the Pharisees on the unpleasant subject of divorce, a lot of loving parents, living in joyous wedlock, brought a number of their sweet little children to him, with the request that he bless them by placing his hands on them and praying for them. But his disciples, thinking their Master had neither wish nor time to be annoyed with children, rebuked those who brought them. This act moved Jesus with indignation, and he turned the rebuke of his disciples upon themselves, saying, "Suffer the little children and forbid them not to come

unto me; for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven." Then he took them up in his arms and blessed them. Very naturally Jesus loved little children, for they are pure and teachable, and, having a keen sense of dependence, they are free from duplicity and schemes of ripened selfishness. His heart hungered for the pure love of little children. Appreciation of the worth of childhood in adult thinking dates from that day.

15. *Material Riches.*

Our Lord's disciples held easily the popular notions of material property then prevalent—which had grown up through the preceding centuries—namely, that the owners of large possessions are entitled to special considerations and privileges, and that benevolence is rightly measured by a commercial unit. To these ideas Jesus said, No—ability is the measure of accountability; riches are deceitful, and those who trust in these may enter the kingdom of God only by special divine favor. Further, he taught that the ratio of one's gift to his property is the divine measure of his generosity. On one occasion many

rich men cast much into the Lord's treasury; at the same time a poor widow cast in two-fifths of one cent, and Jesus said, "This poor widow cast in more than all." By this law many humble souls who live unknown and die unhonored and unsung will be discovered to be princes and princesses of the Lord, while some millionaires, far better known by their great gifts than for their many crimes against the children of penury and toil, will be revealed as spiritual vagabonds in the great day of reckoning and doom.

16. *Human Greatness.*

More than once during the period of his personal ministry the twelve contended among themselves about who of them should be the greatest in the approaching kingdom. They thought that personal greatness was a thing of place and power, of position and the right of large authority. To these mistaken and age-continuing misconceptions the Master made two answers. A little child was made an object lesson. Unless you become like this child in his freedom from inferior ideals, consuming ambitious and wicked strifes, you can not

even enter my kingdom. Second, Jesus spoke a truth that these opening years of this twentieth century are just beginning to understand. Individual greatness is achieved in the unselfish service of one's fellowmen. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Any one is great in his generation just as he approaches this supreme and sublime example.

17. *His Deeds of Mercy.*

Our Lord's personal ministry included the bearing of our griefs and the carrying of our sorrows, for he himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases. That objections were interposed to this beneficent helpfulness indicates the average heartlessness of the time. As he came to Jericho with his disciples and a multitude of people, he passed two blind beggars who sat by the highway plying their hard business. Their ears caught the sound of the moving of many feet, and they inquired what it meant. They were told that "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." But he was beyond the reach of their voices; so it appears

that they hastened around the walls of the city to the gate out of which Jesus would pass. There by the highway they sat down. After a time their keen hearing recognized the approach of the multitude. They resolved not to be too late this time, and so began at once their importunate appeal, led by Bartimeus, probably the better known and more resolute of the two: "Lord, have mercy on us, thou Son of David." "And they that went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace." But as their cry continued many joined in the rebuke. This only led them to "cry out the more a great deal," so that the multitude was led to join in the protest. These unfortunate men believed that with them it was now or never—the restoration of their vision just then or blindness to the end of their lives; so their cry rang out until Jesus approached and stood still and said, doubtless to those who had tried to make them keep still, "Call ye him." Thus he rebuked the blindness of heart of those who were so slow to understand him. It is not annoyance to him, but a pleasure to hear the cries of human need and misery. "Be of good cheer, he calleth you." Casting aside

their garments, they sprang up and came to Jesus. They had proclaimed him the Messiah in calling him the Son of David, and they had heard in their book of Isaiah that Messiah should give sight to the blind; so when Jesus asked, "What will ye that I should do unto you?" they said, "Rabboni, that we may receive our sight." Their hearts were filled with pain as they recalled the past and fluttered with anxious hope as they thought of the future; but great joy swept away their fears when Jesus said, "Receive your sight; go your way; your faith hath made you whole."

18. *Expressions of Love for the Master.*

A notable company gathered in a residence in the village of Bethany on Sunday evening of Passion week. The home was that of Simon, the leper, who had doubtless been healed of that frightful malady by our Lord, and who probably gave this supper as a small expression of his gratitude. The beautiful Mary and the busy Martha were there, as was also their brother Lazarus, who held in his thought some of the secrets of eternity. No one of the

company, not even Judas, found any fault with the host on account of the abundance and excellence of the supper. As they were reclining at the table, Mary broke a box of precious, fragrant, pure nard, and with its contents anointed the head and feet of the Master. Of all those who held companionship with our Lord during his earth-life probably no one had such a clear vision of his mission as she. Her pure heart was singularly spiritual. She was drawn to the Master by a love that only such noble souls can know or understand. As the house was filled with the pleasing odor, some disciples had indignation within themselves, and said, "To what purpose hath this waste of the ointment been made? And they murmured against her." But such quiet protests did not suit Judas, so he blurted out his hypocritical question, "Why was not this ointment sold for fifty dollars and given to the poor?" John says that Judas did not care for the poor and that he was a thief. Jesus replied, "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye may

do them good; but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could; she hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying." Judas was a lean-souled miser. The love of money had withered his heart and quenched its affection. Not being able to appreciate this gracious expression of Mary's love for the Master, he was quick to condemn it. As quickly the Teacher came to her defense in his threefold rejoinder; she seized the opportunity while it was within her reach; she hath done what she could—she anticipates my burial by anointing my body before my agony; and this deed can never die because it sprang out of holy affection. The pulseless tomb hushes the deeds of the world's great into the eternal silence, but love's acts have in them the germs of deathlessness and eternity.

19. *The Stability of the Temple.*

Just as Jesus was making his final departure from the temple his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of that glorious structure that was the pride and joy of every Jew. One of them said, "Behold, what manner

of stones, and what manner of buildings!" In this building there were stones of the whitest marble sixty-seven feet long, seven feet high and nine feet broad; nine gates overlaid with silver and gold, and one of solid Corinthian brass; graceful and towering porches; double cloisters and stately pillars; and the lavish adornments of sculpture and arabesque. Surely, the disciples reasoned, a building so strong and so magnificent, and withal the habitation of Jehovah, will stand. But to the eye of the Teacher the superior beauty and stability of the temple were to be found in the sincerity and fidelity of its worshippers. It had now become a den of thieves, hence his reply was brief and solemn. "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." In less than forty years thereafter it sank into the ashes of its ruin. After the Roman army had taken Jerusalem, Commander Titus held a council of his generals. He declared to them that by all means the temple should be saved as an ornament to the empire, but his generals voted to burn it. Man proposes, but God dis-

poses. Rufus, who was left in command of the army, tore up its foundations with a ploughshare and made Jerusalem become as heaps.

20. *With Peter.*

In the closing hours of our Lord's life he found it necessary on three occasions to correct the over-sanguine Peter.

(1.) His courage. While they were yet assembled about the Passover table the Master said to his disciples, "Whither I go ye can not come." Peter answered, "I can not see why, for I am ready to go with thee into prison or to lay down my life for thy sake." Jesus answered him, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Verily I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." Whether what follows was spoken in the guest-chamber or in Gethsemane is not clear. Jesus said, "All ye shall be offended in me this night." Peter replied, "If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended." Whatever others may do, Master, you can depend upon me. Jesus answered him, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that

he might sift you as wheat; but I have made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not." "In this night before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice." Peter's self-confidence then reached the boiling point, and he vehemently declared, "Though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise." And the quiet answer came again, "The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." Before the sun had purpled the eastern sky on the morrow presumptuous Peter had five times denied his Lord.

(2.) Washing Peter's feet. The owner of the property had cheerfully given up the best room in his house to this company of strangers. The things needed for the Passover had been prepared, among which were water, basins and towels. But no menial was present, and no one of the disciples had volunteered for this humblest service, so Jesus began to wash his disciples' feet. When he came to Peter, he said, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" He recognized the majesty of his Lord and quickly decided that it would be altogether unbefitting and out of place for Jesus to wash his feet. "What I do thou knowest not now,

but thou shalt understand hereafter." But these words did not assure Peter, since the proposed act of his Lord was so filled with self-abasement. So with vehemence he declared, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." This condescension was quite incomprehensible to him, and to such an incongruity he would never submit. Jesus assured him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." One may wonder whether Peter caught then the meaning of his Master's words; or did the word "wash" convey to his thought the conception of the spiritual cleansing that his Lord would render available for him through his own deeper humiliation of the cross? If to be washed of thee has such significance, then, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. With such gentle and patient leadings did he inspire his inconstant disciple with a holy devotion.

(3.) His mistaken defense of his Master. The hour of the Redeemer's agony had passed and he turned his face toward the mockery of his trials and the shame of his cross. A great multitude, with both Jewish and Roman officers led by Judas, carrying lanterns and

torches and armed with swords and staffs, came into Gethsemane to arrest him. As they approached, Jesus unexpectedly met them and said to Judas, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" The traitor said, "Hail, Master, Master," as he kissed him. The answering question of Jesus was, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" The infamy of that atrocious act projected a proverb through all subsequent time. Then Jesus asked the leaders of the crowd, "Whom seek ye?" They said, "Jesus of Nazareth." "I am he," Jesus responded. These simple words, spoken by the majestic Christ, overpowered that armed multitude, so that "they went backward and fell to the ground." When they rose up the question and answer were repeated. Then the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews laid hands on Jesus, and took him and bound him. His disciples asked him, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" But while they were asking about the proper course for themselves, Peter had gotten to business—the arrest of his Master was more than he could put up with; so, snatching his sword from its scabbard and striking at the head of

a man, he cut off the right ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. The bound Jesus spoke, "Suffer ye thus far," and, touching the severed ear, he restored it to its normal place and condition. Marvelous majesty of love and power! Then he said to Peter, "Put up thy sword again into the sheath; for all that take the sword shall perish by the sword." Jesus deprecated such a defense of himself and gave two reasons therefor: First, if he needed such protection, at his asking the Father would give him twelve legions of angels; and, second, only by the voluntary surrender of himself to death could he accomplish his mission. Our Lord forbids recourse to the sword by which to avenge personal injuries—leave such to the civil authority and to God. All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword applies rather to communities and organizations of men, both political and religious. Religious systems that have built themselves up by physical violence will perish by such violence. The enduring strength of a nation is in its universal intelligence, in its justice and righteousness, rather than in its great armies and navies.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTROVERSIES WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SEVERAL PARTIES AMONG THE JEWS AND THEIR OFFICIALS.

In these conversations and discourses our Lord becomes much more pronouncedly controversial; for among these parties were those who made parts of the divine law void through their traditions, and who fiercely defended a hierarchy that was a powerful enginery of injustice and oppression. The teachings and acts of Jesus called out their keenest criticisms and bitterest opposition. In these discussions his aim was threefold; to expose and ~~remove erroneous and false thoughts from~~ their minds, to ~~plant~~ the seeds of spiritual truth in their hearts, and to awaken a sincere interest in the things of the kingdom of heaven. With sadness and tears he spoke his failure.

1. *His Authority.*

Questions relative to his authority were quite natural and right. His claims were without a parallel. He assumed and claimed to exercise the exclusive prerogatives of God.

(1.) The forgiveness of sins. The scribes or rabbis were the recognized leaders of the Jewish nation. The people looked up to them with pride as their teachers of religion, their political advisers, legislators and jurists. By their active ministeries and through their teachings and exhortations, they made their influence felt in every school and synagogue throughout Palestine. Jesus had returned to Capernaum, and, as he taught the people and healed the afflicted, a crowd jammed every approach to his immediate presence; so some kind friends, through a hole made in the roof of the house, let down a paralyzed man on his bed, before the Teacher. He said to him, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." The scribes who were sitting there reasoned in their hearts and muttered among themselves, "This man blasphemeth; who can forgive sins but God alone?" Their answer

was true if Jesus were not the Son of God. But he perceived their thoughts, and made answer simple and direct. "Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" It is as easy for me to heal the soul as to restore health to the body; and that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins, this man, at my word, will now walk to his home, carrying his bed. He went at once. He was brought a helpless cripple—he returned to his home carrying his couch.

This was the beginning of the open difference between our Lord and this powerful class of leaders. It ended on Calvary.

(2.) His reformatory work. The reformatory work of Jesus was an open and direct assault upon the rabbis in their shameless abuses of power and their perversion of the rights of the people. Once, near the beginning of his public ministry, and again near its close, he entered the temple; there he overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold doves, and with a whip that he made of small cords he drove out the oxen and sheep, and said to the traffickers, "It is written, my house is the house

of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." They replied to him, "You have driven our trades from the temple and permit yourself to be acclaimed the Son of David; you are neither scribe nor priest, nor do you hold a commission either from the Sanhedrim or Cæsar; tell us therefore by what authority you do these things, and who gave thee this authority?" The many and mighty works of Jesus should have been to these disputants an unmistakable answer, but all these works they deliberately ignored. On his first public visit to the temple they had asked him for a sign—he had given them not a few. Further effort to enlighten them would have been folly. They often tried to place him in a dilemma; this he then applied to them. When they soon found themselves impaled upon both horns of possible answers that they might give to his question put them about John's baptism, the question about his authority ceased to be with them a matter of public discussion.

These Jewish officials were the "stand-patters" of their time and places. The Teacher from Galilee urged some changes in

the existing order of things; hence they were his enemies. He advocated needed reforms; they insisted that well-enough be let alone. He said, your system oppresses the unfortunate and robs the poor; your sheckels are stained with the blood of unpaid or underpaid toil, and your lepta are wet with the tears of suffering women and children. They replied, how comes that to be any of your business? We will kill you.

2. The Observance of the Mosaic Sabbath.

Probably in nothing did Jesus clash with his opponents oftener than upon the proper observance of the Mosaic Sabbath. Their opposition was based upon two grounds: First, that his disciples went through the grain fields and plucked and ate the grain; and, second, that he himself healed various afflicted persons on that day.

The Pharisees said to him, "Behold, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." The charge was false, for the law contained no such proscription. Hence the answer of Jesus was a fivefold argument:

(1.) David and his comrades ate of the shew-bread, which confessedly it was not lawful for them to do, yet you justify them; but you condemn my disciples for doing that which the law does not forbid.

(2.) The priests, in the discharge of their duties in the temple on the Sabbath, perform manual labor which the law forbids. But that general law was modified by the specific statute concerning the temple service; hence the prohibition of labor on the Sabbath was not universal; and so it does not include what my disciples have just done.

(3.) One greater than the temple is here; that is, the service that my disciples are rendering me is greater than the functions performed by the priests in the temple. If the priests are justifiable, much more are my disciples.

(4.) You Pharisees do not know the meaning of Hosea, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." Mercy toward my hungering disciples is more acceptable to God than sacrifices at the altar. Had you known this, you would not have condemned these guiltless men.

(5.) "The Son of man is lord of the Sab-

bath;" that is, my divine authority reaches even to this sacred day, and my disciples are to observe it under my direction.

Such was our Lord's answer in this instance—clear, logical and conclusive. In passing, it may be well to note that Jesus here assumes the same omnipotent prerogative that was exercised at Mount Sinai in giving the decalogue.

This incident in the field was followed soon afterward on another Sabbath by the healing of the withered hand of a man in the synagogue. Taught a lesson in prudence by the preceding argument of Jesus, the Pharisees now approach him by a question, as if seeking information, but in truth that they might accuse him: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" Jesus again replied, *ad hominem*. "What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much, then, is a man of more value than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." Such acts are not excusable violations of law—they are lawful.

The healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda who had been thirty-eight years in his infirmity, and the man who was born blind at the pool of Siloam, each on a Sabbath, led to some of the most extended controversies recorded of Jesus.

He answered the angry words of the ruler of a synagogue, condemning the restoration of a woman who had suffered a pitiable affliction for eighteen years, and the healing of a man who had the dropsy, both on a Sabbath, by reference to their common custom of dealing with an ass or an ox on that day. In the one case all his adversaries were put to shame, and in the other they could not answer him again.

But, while they found themselves no match for Jesus in their disputations, because of their false positions and evil aims, they could go out and take counsel how they might destroy him. The prison and the stake, the cross and the bloody tools of pagan and semi-pagan persecutions, the stiletto and the bludgeon, the gun and bomb, have generally been the reserved instruments of errorists defeated in the arena of public discussion.

3. *The Religious Provincialism of the Jews.*

In his sermon on the mountain our Lord spoke as one having authority; hence he proceeded to confirm that authority by accordant deeds. There was then stationed at Capernaum a centurion, by blood a Gentile, reared in hereditary heathenism, but in his faith a Jew. This excellent military officer had outgrown the prevalent prejudice and creed of his class, for he loved the Jewish nation, and had built for them a synagogue in Capernaum. When this man's servant fell dangerously ill, he requested the elders of the Jews to solicit Jesus to heal him. Jesus replied that he would do so, but before his arrival at the centurion's residence he sent word that he himself was not worthy that Jesus should come under his roof, but if he would only speak the word his servant would be healed. At this most singular exhibition of humility and faith Jesus marveled and said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Our Lord expressed astonishment at two things only, the superior faith of this Gentile, who had come up out of adverse conditions into

implicit trust, and the unbelief of his own people, who had the advantage of instruction by their own Scriptures and the preaching of John the Baptist. These two extremes of attitude toward himself led Jesus to speak those prophetic words, "Many shall come from the east and the west" and shall sit down in the everlasting kingdom of heaven; "but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness."

4. *His Alleged League with Satan.*

The forensic method of Jesus has further illustration in his reply to those who charged him with being in league with Satan, in his beneficent work of casting out demons from those afflicted. The case cited is that of the man who was both blind and dumb through the power of the evil spirit in him. When Jesus cast it out, the unfortunate man instantly received both vision and speech. The people who witnessed the case were amazed and expressed their opinion of Jesus in the question, "Can this be the Son of David?" But the Pharisees tried to explain the healing by saying, "This man doth not cast out de-

mons, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons." All recognized the miracle, that no one did or could deny; hence his enemies, in their attempt to break its logical force, affirmed that it had been performed, not by the power of God, but by the help of Satan. The answer of Jesus was clear and conclusive. He said:

(1.) You admit that in the kingdom of darkness Satan is ruler and that demons are among his subjects, and are his agents for the accomplishment of his malign ends. Now, if by his permissive power, I have done this deed, said Jesus, then Satan is at war with himself; hence his kingdom, being divided against itself, can not stand, his kingdom is brought to desolation.

(2.) You believe and say that some people cast out demons. Admitting that this is true, you do not agree that this power of exorcism came from Satan, but, on the contrary, that it came from God; and, if this is true of them, why may it not be of myself? Your own friends prove your allegation against me in this instance false.

(3.) That I cast out demons by the Spirit

of God is indisputable; for one can not enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods except he first bind the owner and occupant. This I have done; for in this case Satan is the strong man, the body of the possessed man is his house, and his goods the evil spirit within the man. Herein I have shown myself to be stronger than Satan. The demon is gone and the man is well; he both sees and speaks. This evidence of God's power in me is proof of the divine authority of all I say; therefore you should believe that the kingdom of God is come unto you.

The application of this argument of Jesus to those Pharisees was direct, pointed and terribly forceful. He said to them, "You are against me, you are corrupt trees, the treasures of your hearts are evil. In your vain and wicked charge against the Divine Power in me by whom these deeds of benevolence are wrought, you blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. In rejecting his testimony of me you reject me, and, in so doing, you commit the sin that shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come."

5. *A Sign from Heaven.*

When the foregoing significant words had fallen upon their ears, what did those Pharisees do? Simply turned around and said, "Teacher, we would see a sign from thee." One knows not which is the more surprising, their stubborn unbelief or their brazen effrontery. They asked for a sign different from those they had already seen. What was our Lord's answer?

(1.) The experience of the prophet Jonah with the great fish was a type of my burial and resurrection—an irrefutable sign even to this evil and adulterous generation.

(2.) The man of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. You should repent at my preaching rather than be asking for added proofs of my nature and mission.

(3.) The queen of Sheba came a long journey to hear the wisdom of Solomon. I am greater than Solomon, and my words wiser than his, yet in your hypocrisy you reject them.

(4.) An unclean spirit went out of a man and wandered in wretchedness seeking rest,

but found none; then, deciding to return into the man from whom he had gone out, he found a welcome waiting; so, taking seven other spirits more evil than himself, they entered in and dwelt there, and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation. The ever-increasing wickedness of the Jewish nation came to its culmination in the awful experience of its utter destruction in less than forty years.

6. *The Prevalent Hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees.*

The conduct of Jesus, measured by the customs of those among whom he lived, was often singular. As he concluded his reply to the request of the Pharisees for some special sign, a rich man of that party gave him a pressing invitation to dinner, which he at once accepted. The Teacher found himself in a company of rich men, now his open enemies, cold and haughty, and with frowning faces. This invitation had not come from a friendly feeling of hospitality, but from a hostile aim. They found at once a ground of attack, for he, dis-

regarding a tradition of their elders, sat down to meat without having first washed his hands. Doubtless their feelings of astonishment and bitter resentment increased as Jesus proceeded to expose their duplicity. He said to them, "You Pharisees, in your outward appearance, are like clean and polished cups and platters, but your inward parts—your minds and hearts—are full of extortion and wickedness. Do you think, you foolish men, that your inner is less than your outer life before your God? Cast out of your hearts the pride, the insolence and the consuming greed that fills them, and then your outer life will be pleasing to him, although uncleansed by ceremonial washings." Next three times the Teacher said, "Woe unto your Pharisees," and names to them the reasons: You place the emphasis on external trifles, as tithing petty garden herbs, and neglect the great concerns of the inner life, as the love of right and of God—the greater duties you ought to do, the less you ought not to leave undone; your hollow formality is full of spiritual pride, and your professions and outward show may conceal your hypocritical pretensions, but your corrupt

character continues to pollute the people. What a startling arraignment was this!

Then one of the lawyers responded, "Teacher, in saying this, you reproach us also." The lawyers, or scribes as they are generally called, were the religious teachers of the time. Their work of copying the sacred Scriptures made them familiar with their contents; hence they became the recognized interpreters of the law. If this lawyer thought that the Teacher had been just then unguarded in his words and that he would be induced to modify them, he was quickly undeceived, for a threefold "Woe unto you lawyers" at once followed. "You lawyers, with shameless inconsistency, enforce with a heartless rigor your traditions; you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed, not because you respect and honor the prophets, but to conceal the same spirit of murder that moves you against me, and ere long your own act will evidence that you allow the deeds of your fathers—then the blood of all the prophets that has been shed from the foundation of the world will be required of this generation; and you even take away from the people the key

Language

of knowledge—the knowledge of the Scriptures you prevent, and the right understanding of them you pervert by your traditions and ceremonies.”

The words of the Teacher stung his hearers to the quick, so, as he left the house, they set themselves vehemently against him, to provoke him to speak of many things in their efforts to catch something out of his mouth. And thus it came to pass that even so early in his ministry with these representatives of the hierarchy his doom was already settled.

On Tuesday of passion week the scathing words recorded in Matthew, twenty-third chapter, were spoken by the Master to the same class of hearers, and with the same aims in view. Never were severer epithets employed, never more terrible denunciations uttered.

7. His Social Conduct.

The social conduct of Jesus called out adverse criticisms. His teaching attracted the submerged; they drew near to him. On the invitation of Matthew, who was a publican or collector of taxes imposed by the Roman government, and hence despised by his fellow-

Social

countrymen, Jesus went into his house to enjoy his hospitality. He mingled and ate with both common and uncommon sinners. His words were so gracious and gentle and his bearing so pure and kindly that men and women of immoral lives were not afraid of him. So his critics said, "Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." What vindication did he make of his conduct? This:

(1.) These people are very sick in their souls. It is my business to cure them.

(2.) Your God has said that mingling with such people for their good is more acceptable than sacrifices at the altar.

(3.) It is my work to call sinners, not the righteous, to repentance. My mission is addressed to all the aspects of human life. It should also be noted that the three charming parables of Luke, fifteenth chapter, the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost or prodigal son, were all spoken by the Master primarily in vindication of his social conduct.

8. *Fasting.*

The feast that Matthew made, shortly after he had been called from the receipt of custom

Lost Coin, Sheep, Prodigal

to companionship with our Lord, fell on a fast day. The Pharisees counted themselves persons of superior piety because they fasted twice in the week. The disciples of John the Baptist, following his example, were particularly abstemious. It was generally observed that Jesus paid little or no attention to the common custom of fasting, and that his disciples ate and drank as they chose. This led some of John's disciples to come to Jesus with the sincere inquiry, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, and thy disciples fast not?" To this inquiry the Teacher made the following reply:

(1.) It is not customary for people assembled at a wedding to fast; my presence with my disciples is as a wedding feast to them—it is a time of rejoicing for them—when I am gone away from them they may mourn and fast.

(2.) It is not usual for people to mend old garments by sewing unto them pieces of new or unshrunk cloth, for it will, when it shrinks, tear out a larger rent.

(3.) Nor is it the custom to put unfermented wine into old wine-skins, for having no

elasticity, they will soon be broken open by the force of fermentation. Fasting is valuable, not on the ground of custom, but as it may be required by conditions and circumstances.

9. *The Bread of Life.*

John's gospel introduces some of the largest and most involved recorded discussions of our Lord. In feeding the five thousand he reached the climax of his popularity. The multitude reasoned, we may well follow such a generous and powerful rabbi, and indeed, by force make him our king. But he said to them, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracle, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." Content with the satisfaction of their animal appetite, they wholly failed to see the meaning of his mighty works. And so Jesus, making material things the vehicles for the communication of spiritual truth, sought to lift their thoughts to higher and abiding interests. "Work not for the food that perishes, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." Would they be led to accept him as the Son of God who alone could supply their spiritual needs?

They asked him, "What must we do that we may work the works of God?" This was the spirit of their time. There were among them many observances and practices, some smaller, others greater. How may we know them all that none may be neglected? He answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." They inquired about works—works of God that will honor him. "The very first," answered Jesus, "is that ye believe on me as the One sent by the Father." They replied, "What, then, doest thou for a sign, that we may see and believe thee? What workest thou?" The day previous they had declared that of a truth he was their promised Messiah, but their worldly conceptions of him were being shattered. "Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness." They insinuated that Christ's miracle in feeding the multitude with the loaves was inferior to that of Moses, who met the hunger not of a few thousand once, but of millions through years. Jesus replied, "It was not Moses that gave you that bread out of heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down out

of heaven and giveth life unto the world." Jesus was indeed that "eternal life" which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. This the people yet failed to see, but in some spiritual impulse they said, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." Jesus answered, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Jesus was himself the sign from heaven, infinitely greater than the manna, and to all believers the substance and fountain of the divine, the spiritual and the eternal.

10. *The Traditions of the Elders.*

In his conversations with his proud opponents, our Lord sometimes followed the Socratic method. Some of their representatives were sent from Jerusalem up to Galilee with a view of counteracting his influence among the people. They soon observed that his disciples were disregarding one of the traditions. The Jews of that day distinguished between their written law and their traditional law, or "law of the lip," as the latter was called. Its more earnest votaries declared that

this law had been orally delivered to Moses at Mount Sinai, and orally transmitted through a succession of elders. On these traditions the Talmud, or doctrine, was founded, which consisted of the Mishna, or repetition, and the Gemara, or supplement. The influences of this traditional law had so grown that to read the sacred Scriptures was a matter of indifference, but to read the Mishna was meritorious, and to read the Gemara was to receive the richest recompense. The representatives of the Jerusalem hierarchy said to Jesus, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." This washing was not a matter of hygienic precaution, but a ceremonial cleansing to be religiously observed. "Rabbi, you can not deny the fact and probably will not disclaim the responsibility, that your disciples thus transgress." Jesus replied, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" That was an incisive contrast. Of course my disciples transgress your tradition, but your tradition transgresses the commandment of God. Which is the greater, man's tradition or God's commandment? which

Tradition & Commandment

is the higher authority? Jesus also illustrated his charge by an example, saying, "You clearly recognize the justice in your law that requires children to properly care for their aged or dependent parents, but you teach that if a son in such circumstances say to his father, 'This property I have given to God,' he thereby releases himself from such parental obligation; thus, 'You have made the word of God void by your tradition.' " Our Lord thus attacked and denied the authority of tradition in religion. And his added words have profound significance, "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of your saying:

" 'This people honoreth me with their lips;
But their heart is far from me.
But in vain do they worship me,
Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of
men.' "

No deed, however commendable, can make up for the lack of the life of God in the soul. With this severe application of their Scripture to these self-righteous traditionalists, Jesus turned to the multitude and said, "Hear and understand; not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which pro-

ceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man." What goes in is material, having no moral quality, but what comes out is spiritual, the expression of one's self.

But the disciples were pained at this reply of their Master, because it had given offense to these respectable gentlemen from Jerusalem, and were prompt to tell him so. His answer was this, "Every plant which my heavenly Father planteth not shall be rooted up." Their teaching is without authority from or the approval of God, and I am not aiming to please them, but to root them up. "Let them alone; they are blind guides." It is useless to teach the truth and at the same time to try to please them. "And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit." One who knows himself to be spiritually blind, and following a teacher who acknowledges that he does not see, may expect to fall into a pit with him. Only the Teacher sees *all* the way, and he only is infallible. "Follow me." When they went into a house Peter voiced the wish of the disciples for further information, and Jesus, with a gentle reproof, made plain his law of spiritual cleansing.

Disciples Complained

11. *His Superior Knowledge.*

To his brothers in the flesh, when carping at him, Jesus said, "The world hates me because I testify of it that its works are evil." This was the reason of the hate that he suffered. At this feast of Tabernacles he appears to have been aggressively controversial. In the midst of the feast he went up into the temple and taught publicly, giving probably an exposition of Messianic prophecies. His words so astonished the members of the Sanhedrim that they said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" By the current standards of the time Jesus was a man wholly uneducated. His familiarity with the sacred Scriptures, his wonderful insight into their meaning, and his facility of application astonished to a degree the best educated among the Jews. There was nothing in him that belonged to his age or country. He thus answered their surprise, "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." If you have the right will, if

there is in you the right disposition, you can easily decide whether my teaching is divine or simply human. That you are lacking in this attitude is evidenced by the fact that you do not even keep the law of Moses that you recognize as having been divinely given. "Why seek ye to kill me?" They retorted, "Thou hast a demon; who seeks to kill you?" They held it in their hearts to put him out of the way since that Sabbath day, eighteen months before, on which he had healed a paralytic; and Jesus reasons further that, since they practiced circumcision on the Sabbath day, they should not condemn him for a deed of mercy done on the same day.

In Galilee he had bidden the weary and heavy-laden to come unto him for soul rest; and in the Capernaum synagogue he had assured his hearers that he could appease the hunger and quench the thirst of the soul. These assurances had been addressed to provincial audiences. But now in the capital city, the seat and center of Jewish learning and ecclesiastical power, he teaches openly and publicly. Many who heard him were perplexed. Some said, "Is this not he whom they

seek to kill?" Can it be possible that the members of the Sanhedrim know that he is the Messiah? No, this can not be, for he is the Nazarene carpenter. To such murmurings Jesus spoke out, "Ye both know me and know whence I came." And others asked, "When Christ shall come will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?" When words of approval were heard, officers were sent to arrest him, and thus ended his first day's teaching in the temple on this occasion.

On the last and great day of the feast before the temple crowd, Jesus proclaimed, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water." Material prosperity had crowned the passing year. The people were thankful. Gathered in the temple courts, to remind them of the supply of water that had come to their forefathers in the wilderness journey, the vast assembly witnesses the pouring of water from a golden pitcher, and heard the blowing of the trumpets and other instruments, the chant of many thousands of trained voices, then they broke forth in shouts of joy.

And then the words rang out like the notes of a sweet-toned bell, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The thirst of the soul is the one age-continuing, universal and consuming human desire. Jesus says he can satisfy it.

12. *The Right Treatment of an Adulteress.*

The Scribes and Pharisees brought to him in the temple, where he was teaching the people, an adulteress. They placed her in the midst, where all the spiteful could stare at her, and then said, "Teacher, this woman is unmistakably an adulteress; by the law of Moses she should be stoned to death; but what do you say should be done with her?" Had he answered, "The law must take its course; let her be stoned," the people could have said, "See how merciless he seems to be." Had he replied, "Let her go free," they would have observed, "See how he disregards the law and condones sin." The poor woman was overwhelmed with confusion, shame and fear. The Teacher was not quick to make reply. He turned his look away from both the woman and her accusers, and, stooping, wrote

Stone Throwing

with his finger on the ground—the only words ever traced by the fingers of our Lord. But his enemies, feeling that they now assuredly had him in a trap, pressed him for his answer. He lifted himself up and said unto them, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” Then he resumed his stooping posture and his writing. It was a shot that hit every conscience. And they, having heard his words, went out one by one, beginning from the eldest to the last one—not one was left there except the accused woman. Then Jesus stood up, and, looking at her, asked, “Woman, where are they? Did no man condemn thee?” “No man, Lord,” she answered. And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn thee; go thy way; from henceforth sin no more.” What depths of wisdom, tenderness and power!

13. *The Light of the World.*

In the drama of creation the curtain rose on chaos when God said, “Let there be light.” A sublimer vision was introduced when Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” In the center of the court of the women stood four

large candelabra, which, during the feast of Tabernacles, were lighted after the evening sacrifice—to recall the pillar that had led their forefathers through the wilderness; and so brilliant was this light that it illuminated the whole city. Then and there it was that Jesus said, “I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” This claim is supreme. Jesus affirms himself to be the Light of the whole spiritual world of humanity—the Light of life to guide men to salvation and the Father’s house. The Pharisees objected that, inasmuch as this unparalleled claim was sustained by his own testimony only, it could not be accepted. Jesus met this objection by saying, first, that self-testimony in his case was not invalidated, since “I came from and will return to the Father;” and second, that “the testimony that I bear of myself is true since it is confirmed by that of the Father.” Then they asked, “Where is thy Father?” His answer was, “Ye know neither me nor my Father; if ye knew me ye would know my Father also.” Your willful lack of all true knowledge of me keeps you from knowing God.

The conflict becomes sharper on both sides as the dialogue proceeds and came to its climax when they took up stones to stone him. He told them that they would die in their sins, and hence could not come where he was going. They asked, "Is this because he will kill himself?" No! but you will die in your sins because you believe not on me. They asked, "Who are you?" He replied, "Altogether that which I spoke unto you from the beginning." After you shall have crucified me you will know that I am he.

To those who believed on him he then said that to be my true disciples you must abide in my word, and through your personal knowledge of the truth concerning me and my mission, you will be free. The unbelieving Jews protested that they had never been in bondage to any man—a shameless contradiction of the facts of their history—hence why are you talking to us about freedom? Our Lord showed them that he was speaking of the soul's enslavement in sin and freedom therefrom through himself, the spiritual emancipator. Further, if you were the true lineage of Abraham, you would not be trying to kill me; this

fact proves you to be children of another father. They insisted, "Abraham is our father." "No," Jesus replied, "since you do not the works of Abraham, very evidently you are *not* his children." They retorted hotly, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, God." Jesus answered, "If God were your Father, you would love me. * * * You are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. * * * Because I say the truth you believe me not."

Furthermore, you should accept me on the ground of my absolute sinlessness—"which of you convicteth me of sin?" You do not hear the words of God because you are not of God. The Jews then snapped out, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?" Jesus answered, "I have not a demon; but I honor my Father and ye dishonor me. * * * If a man keep my words he shall never see death." The Jews replied, "Now we know that thou hast a demon. Abraham is dead and the prophets are dead. * * * Art thou greater than they?" Jesus replied, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad." The Jews answered, "Thou art not

yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Jesus answered, "Before Abraham was born, I am." The moral perversity of the captious Jews was hopeless. Every forward step in our Lord's progressive argument only maddened them the more. With equal facility he passed beyond the reach of the stones held fast in their quivering fists.

14. *Divorce.*

The Pharisees who came to Jesus with their question about divorce evidently had in mind his previous teaching on this subject. In his sermon on the mount he had said, "that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress." His enemies now aim to test his consistency. They think they can compel him to contradict his former teaching, or reject the law of Moses on this subject; hence their question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause," that is, for every cause satisfactory to the husband? The question was both difficult and dangerous, for Jesus was now in the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, who had imprisoned and beheaded John the

Baptist because that brave preacher had said to this profligate ruler that it was not lawful for him to put away his wife. What was our Lord's reply? He directs them to the Scripture where the true answer may be found. "Have ye not read"—if they are to reach agreement in conclusion they must occupy and reason from common ground.

(1.) In the beginning God made them male and female, and said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife." Therein was God's will signified that marriage should be the closest and most indissoluble of all human relationships. The relation of father and mother to their children can be dissolved only by death, but the relation of husband and wife in its intimacy and sacredness supersedes even that.

(2.) "The two became one flesh"—so long as both are in the flesh. And since they are "one flesh," the relation of the pair can be dissolved only by death.

(3.) "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Let not man break God's appointment by causeless divorces. Our Lord's work was to return all human

relations to their original intentions, so the divine purposes in marriage should be realized.

But the Pharisees answered him, if you consider your reasoning conclusive please tell us, "why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and put her away?" The Teacher answered, "Moses did not *command* to give a bill of divorcement, he only *suffered* this to be done, and this became of the hardness of their hearts. The moral perversity of men toward women and marriage was such that only so much of the divine as could be enforced by civil government could be reflected. The permission of Moses grew out of the debased condition of the people. "But from the beginning it was not so. And *I* say unto you." Jesus here by his own sovereign authority reaffirms the law that was made at the creation of our race, and that he had already reenacted and embodied in his sermon on the mount.

15. *Paying Taxes to the Roman Government.*

It was Tuesday of passion week and Jesus was in the temple. The Pharisees were persistent in their efforts to ensnare him in his

conversations. So they watched him, and sent forth spies, certain of their disciples, with the Herodians, to take hold of his speech, so as to deliver him up to the rule and authority of the governor. With fine craftiness they approached him saying, "Teacher, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, and acceptest not the person of any one, but of a truth teachest the way of God. Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" With these honeyed words they admitted his unimpeachable veracity, his fidelity in teaching the way of God, and his disregard of all opposition and human distinctions of place and power. The concealed malice of their address was equaled by its cunning. Had Jesus answered, Yes, his one word would have at once excited and turned against himself the latent hatred of the Jews to the iron rule of Rome; had he said, No, his reply would have been the ground for the charge of sedition against the dominant civil power, which was the primary aim of the Herodians. But perceiving their craftiness he said to those who had set the trap for him, "Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites?"

Show me the tribute money. * * * Whose is this image and superscription?" They answered, "Cæsar's." He replied, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and to God the things that are God's." You are recognizing the authority of the Roman government over you by your every-day acceptance and use of the money that bears the image and superscription of the head of that government; hence your question to me is a hypocritical quibble. We must admire the ease with which the Master not only extricated himself from an apparently fatal dilemma, but also drove his enemies from his presence overwhelmed and defeated by his few plain words.

16. *The Resurrection of the Dead.*

Next came on the same day the Sadducees to try their skill as dialecticians with this provincial but extraordinary Teacher. They were the agnostics of their time. They did not believe in the existence of the spirit world, nor that there is life after death; hence the resurrection of the dead was with them a thing both unnecessary and impossible. They said

to Jesus that seven brothers were, under the provisions of our law, severally and consecutively, the legal husbands of one woman. Now if the doctrine of the resurrection be true, will you please tell us, sir, whose wife will this woman be in that time? Here was a question involving life and death, time and eternity. The answering arguments of Jesus were characteristic. He said to them:

(1.) You are in error from your ignorance of the Scriptures and the power of God; for the Scripture teaching on the resurrection does not involve the continuance of the marriage relation in the future world, while the power of God is sufficient to form other bodies that shall be free from the propensities of fleshly bodies. You have reached an unwarranted and unauthorized conclusion from your Scriptures.

(2.) You have based your position on the assumption that marital relations will still obtain in the resurrection state. But will they? No being who has ever lived, who was wholly human, can tell. But I, the Son of God, can and do tell you. "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in mar-

riage, but are as the angels in heaven." Death dissolves all earthly ties. This is one of the revelations of our Lord to us. Thus he overturned the position of the Sadducees.

(3.) He next furnished Scriptural proof of the resurrection, saying to them, "Have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him; ye do greatly err." Now, if as you say, the spirits of these men are non-existent, then God affirmed himself to be the God of non-existence, or nothing—this is absurd. The Lord is not the God of the dead, of non-existence, as you say, but of the living; for all live unto him—all spirits, even when out of their bodies, sustain vital relations to him. To the Sadducees the conscious being of human spirits beyond this life carried with it the necessary doctrine of the resurrection. And so they durst not any more ask him any questions.

17. *The Great Commandment of the Law.*

The rabbis had woven a web of their traditions all over the Mosaic law. They had, so

they thought, counted, classified, weighed and measured all the commandments of the ceremonial and moral law, and had concluded that there were two hundred and forty-eight affirmative, and three hundred and sixty-five negative precepts, the latter being the number of letters in the Decalogue and also the number of days in the year. They reasoned that all of these commandments, the directive and the prohibitive, could not be of equal value. Which were the greater, and which the first of all?

The Pharisees soon heard that Jesus had put the Sadducees to silence, and with tireless persistence they returned to attack again the triumphant Teacher. One of their lawyers, aiming to test his knowledge of the law, asked him which is the first or great commandment—the one pre-eminently great. Jesus replied, “Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment. And the second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy-

self." It has been well said of this basic truth that it is first in antiquity, in dignity, in excellence, in justice, in sufficiency, in fruitfulness, in virtue, in extent and in duration. Our Lord's answer was so luminous that the lawyer gave his prompt and cordial assent thereto, a singular distinction.

18. *His Lordship.*

At the close of the preceding conversation no man durst ask him any question. So the Teacher followed up his defeated and retreating opposers with this question, "What think ye of the Christ? whose Son is he?" Whose son must the true Christ be? They answered, "The son of David." Jesus replied, "How, then, doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,

The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand
Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet.

If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?" David, by the inspiration of the Spirit, called the true Messiah his Lord. Could Abraham have called Joseph or Solomon or

any other one of his lineal descendants his Lord? Certainly not. But this David did because the true Messiah was his son by human birth and his Lord by his divine nature. "And no man was able to answer him a word." They could not because they would not, and they would not because they could not answer, without confessing that the Messiah of their Scriptures was both man and God. All parties seem to have realized their discomfiture by this most singular Teacher.

19. *His Divine Sonship.*

The first extended conversation that Jesus had with the Jews about his divine nature was on the occasion of his attendance at the feast of Dedication. This feast was instituted to commemorate the purification of the temple and the renewal of the worship there after the profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was held in midwinter and was celebrated for a period of eight days in the homes of the people throughout the country as well as in the temple; for these two reasons the crowds in attendance in the city were comparatively small. Jesus was walking, probably alone, to

and fro in Solomon's porch, when the Jews came round about him and said, "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ tell us plainly." He made to them the following answer:

(1.) "I told you and ye believe me not," probably referring to what he had said in a former discussion. "Before Abraham was born I am." If you would not believe me then, what reason have I to think you will believe me now?

(2.) "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me," an appeal to his supernatural and superhuman works, or miracles, as the grand evidence of his Divine Sonship.

(3.) "Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." You will not hear my words, you will not follow me, and you even despise the works by which the Father testifies of me. These are proofs that you are not my sheep, and so you will not accept eternal life that I offer you.

(4.) "I and the Father are one." The gravamen of this claim was that, he being a man, made himself God.

This was more than enough; hence they took up stones to stone him. Jesus asked them, "Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of these works do you stone me?" He tried to lead them to see that his good works fully corroborated his claim to oneness with God. They answered, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and, because thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Very evidently these Jews understood that Jesus meant oneness in nature, not merely in sentiment or aims. In reply Jesus said, "Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came [and the Scripture can not be broken] say ye of him, whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemeth, because I said I am the Son of God?" Our Lord was showing to them that on their own ground, the Messiah could call himself in that higher sense the Son of God without the slightest prejudice to the honor of God. Your law, said he, calls gods the prophets who have a *divine* message to speak, and judges who have a *divine* office to discharge; but there is a

great contrast between them and myself because the Father *hath set me apart and sent me into* the world. This is said of no merely human messenger, however exalted his mission and however sacred his work, but only of the Son himself. He alone was set apart and sent into the world by the Father. Then again Jesus appealed to the proof of his works, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works." But with ears duller and hearts harder, "they sought again to take him; and he went forth out of their hand." Second. The officers who arrested the Master in Gethsemane near midnight led him first before Annas, who "asked him of his disciples and his teaching." He answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in synagogues, and in the temple; and in secret spake I nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them that heard me what I said unto them; behold, these know the things which I said." This reply was too frank to suit their snarled duplicity; so one of the officers struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" With

surprising patience and gentleness Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of that evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" The wretched time-server was speechless.

Later the same night, when the Master stood before the Sanhedrim, they asked him, "Art thou the Christ? Tell us." This council was composed of scribes whose ignorance he had exposed; of priests whose greed he had reproved; of elders whose hypocrisy he had branded; and of skeptical Sadducees whose proud sapience he had confuted. All of these, filled with a common hatred for this Nazarene disturber, had hurriedly assembled to hasten him to his death. Answering their question, Jesus said to them, "If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." With no denial whatever of these things, they next shift to false witnesses, but in this they also failed. The high priest then arose and stood in the midst and asked Jesus, "Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?" Feeling that thus far they had failed in their case by this artful question, they tried

to get some self-condemnatory admission or confession from him. "But Jesus held his peace and answered nothing." His majestic silence troubled, thwarted and maddened them. In a fury of despair the high priest said, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God, the Son of the Blessed?" To such a question and so adjured Jesus could not be silent; so he said unto him, "Thou hast said; I am. Nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." I am the Son of God, and, while you now deny me, yet you shall know me to be such when my imperishable kingdom is established upon the ruins of your theocracy. Then all the council united in the question put to Jesus, "Art thou, then, the Son of God?" He answered them, "Ye say that I am." In this you speak the truth. Whereupon they unanimously voted him to be guilty of blasphemy and worthy of death.

CHAPTER V.

CONTROVERSIES WITH VARIOUS OTHER PEOPLE.

1. *A Woman of Samaria.*

After his first public attendance at the Passover the Master and his disciples were returning from Judea to Galilee. Passing through Samaria, they came to Jacob's well at midday, and because Jesus was wearied with his journey, he sat down there. While thus resting a woman of the nearby town of Sychar came hither for water, to whom Jesus said, "Give me to drink." The request quite surprised her, so she answered, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman?" This is the first of the four recorded instances of our Lord's dealings with those outside of the pale of Judaism. The average Jew would have scorned to hold any kind of intercourse with her, but *he* opened the conversation, although her character was questionable. To her ques-

tion he said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." The bodily fatigue and thirst of Jesus were at once forgotten in his opportunity to lift this woman's thoughts to higher things. She answered him, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; whence hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?" Her thoughts are not yet above the well top; so Jesus replied, "Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again"—the water from this well and all similar blessings contribute to one's physical needs only, and must be supplied again and again—"but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up into eternal life." She said to him, "Sir, give me this water that I thirst not, neither come all the way thither to draw." Still she did not understand that Jesus was speaking to her of the great need of her soul,

and his ability and desire to meet that need. Failing to reach her heart by this direct approach, he next aims to awaken her conscience, so he said to her, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." She replied, "I have no husband." Jesus answered, "Thou saidst well, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband; this thou hast said truly." The direction of the Master as to her husband was well-aimed. It brought to her direct attention the unlawful domestic relation in which she was living and stirred in her heart a sense of shame. To her credit she did not wish to converse on that subject, and sought at once to dismiss it by introducing another. "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Thus she shifted the subject of conversation from a personal to a public one.

She much prefers to subordinate the question about her own personal purity to that of right views as to the place to worship! How representative she was! for practice has for so long been made secondary to precept, while

confession of the lips by myriads has been denied by the life. Jesus, having put one probe in her conscience, let that pass. For three hundred and fifty years the Samaritans had worshiped on Mount Gerizim; so they had come to regard it as the holiest mountain in the world. The Jews opposed this view and insisted that Jerusalem was the right place to worship; and out of this difference had grown the deep-seated prejudice and passionate animosity between the two peoples. Our Lord's answer to her inquiry was threefold.

(1.) "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father." The proper place of worship will very soon be a question of no moment; the inauguration of a new and spiritual dispensation is at hand.

(2.) "Ye worship that ye know not; we worship that which we know; for salvation is of the Jews." The Samaritans were wrong as to the place as well as the grounds and nature of worship.

(3.) "God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." You inquire about the proper *place*, while the far

more important question is the *Being* to be worshiped, and the spiritual attitude and devotion of all those who are his true worshippers. Evidently with a better frame of mind the woman then said, "I know that Messiah cometh [he that is called Christ]; when he is come he will declare unto us all things." Jesus said to her, "I that speak unto thee am he."

2. *His Neighbors at Nazareth.*

On two occasions our Lord came into sharp differences with his neighbors at Nazareth. The first was upon his return thither from Samaria as noted above. According to his custom he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. With befitting reverence for the Scripture, he stood up to read from the book of the prophet Isaiah. The passage he selected announced the whole object of his own mission on earth: The Spirit of the Lord has anointed him to preach good tidings to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, liberty to them that are bruised and the acceptable year of the Lord. Re-

turning the book to the attendant, he sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. This earnest attention was not disappointed, for as he applied this Scripture to himself, and spoke sympathetically to them of their spiritual poverty, brokenheartedness, bondage and bruisedness, they all wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. Still their poor hearts were too blind and slow to understand him; so they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" We recognize him as such and a carpenter of our village. He has received no rabbinical education, and his unusual claims must be confirmed here by some such great deeds as we have heard he has done in Capernaum. The reply of Jesus was a twofold rebuke, in which he indicated the grounds of their unbelief:

(1.) In the time of famine in the days of Elijah, there were many *widows in Israel*, but unto none of them was the prophet sent, but he was sent to a Gentile widow at Sarepta.

(2.) In the time of Elisha there were many lepers in Israel, none of whom were cleansed by the prophet's direction, but Naaman, the Syrian, was thus cleansed. This part of his

sermon filled his hearers with wrath. What, they inquired, does he count us not even so deserving of divine favor as Gentile dogs or loathsome lepers?

This presumption of this carpenter is unbearable. And so this meeting for public worship was suddenly broken up with a rush as "they cast him forth out of their city, and led him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way."

Later in his ministry Jesus returned to Nazareth. The hot wrath of his neighbors had cooled down. When the Sabbath day came he again began to teach in the synagogue. How many of his former hearers were present? Did they recall their former treatment of him with any feelings of regret or shame? His present discourse astonished them. Their perplexity was expressed as follows: "What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by his hands?" They clearly recognized the great superiority of his religious teaching, and frankly admitted the unequalled power mani-

fested in his deeds. "Is not this the carpenter's son, and himself a carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" Their long and intimate acquaintance with him as a man blinded them to the truth of his divinity. He had been for years simply an equal among them, but growing quickly into great repute, their envy held them from honest inquiry into the real reason of his superiority. They were offended in him. A scepter, not a saw or hatchet, was the symbol of their ideal Messiah. Jesus replied, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." Intense jealousy blinds their minds and holds them fast to their materialistic fancies of the Messiah. How could this unschooled mechanic, whom they had known from his childhood, and who was now going about preaching humility and self-denial, be the promised One? Jesus "marveled because of their unbelief," "and could there do no mighty work save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk and healed them." But to most of his old neighbors their unbelief was as

an impassible mountain against his gracious and beneficent ministry.

3. *Certain Cities about their Gross Materialism and Unbelief.*

It was in the earlier period of his ministry that our Lord "began to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not." Evidently he thought that his miracles were sufficient to unmistakably confirm his divine authority as the Teacher; hence his preaching should have led those who heard him to repentance. Into Bethsaida and Chorazin, towns on the shore of the Galilean sea, he had gone as a sympathetic friend, teaching and healing, but the hearts of those peoples were obdurate; so he now reveals himself as the divine judge. Had Tyre and Sidon, in the days of their strength and glory, been favored as you now are, their people would have repented in deep contrition of soul. "I say unto you it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you." The divine judgments are measured by human ability and opportunity.

In those few years Capernaum was the most favored spot on earth, for it became the Teacher's dwelling-place after his neighbors of Nazareth had driven him from his earlier home. With mingled feelings of disappointment and sorrow must he have spoken to that city, "And thou Capernaum art exalted to heaven" in the rare and rich privileges now accorded you, but you neither improve nor appreciate them; so you will be brought down to Hades; your ruin will be utter. Had Sodom been blessed as you now are, abandoned as it was, its people would have repented and thus averted its overthrow. "I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."

4. *The Obligations of Kinship.*

Jesus was speaking to a multitude of people wedged so closely together that no one could pass through the crowd. His sermon was of things solemn and supreme. In the midst of this discourse a man at the entrance called out to him that his mother and his brethren were standing without, and wished to speak with him. The answer of Jesus indicates that he

considered this call an interruption and an interference. "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father in heaven, he is my mother, and sister and brother." That is, the ties of Christian faith and the fellowship of Christian service are immeasurably superior to the bonds of blood. He holds in his tenderest love and strongest care each and every one who hears the word of God and does it. Our Lord gives emphasis to this divine conception of human life by saying repeatedly that whosoever loves his father or mother, his brother or sister, husband or wife, son or daughter, more than he loves me is not worthy of me. Who to-day personally ponders and practices this pointed precept?

5. *A Certain Woman Relative to the Blessedness of Mary.*

Closely associated both in time and place with the foregoing incident was another that illustrates the conciseness of the Teacher. He never multiplied or even added words unneces-

sarily—never “occupied the time.” Deeply impressed with his discourse, a certain woman out of the multitude lifted up her voice and said unto him, “Blessed is the woman who gave birth and life to such a man as you are.” “Yes,” said Jesus, “my mother is a blessed woman, but there is something higher than holy and happy motherhood—rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it—a universal possibility lifting up to a more sacred and enduring relation.” Such concise, yet profound and comprehensive replies, are frequently met in the saying of Jesus.

6. *About the Division of an Inheritance.*

The Teacher was surrounded by an immense multitude of interested hearers, and he was preaching particularly to his disciples upon the deep questions of life and duty, death and destiny, when a man out of the crowd interrupted with these words, “Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me.” What an incongruous request that was, and how out of place! This man and his brother had fallen into a dispute over the division of an inheritance to which they were

heirs; and, since he was impressed with the wisdom, fairness and fearlessness of the speaker, as well as the authority with which he spoke, he very inconsiderately thrust his request to the front of attention. But Jesus made short work of him, replying, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" For the guidance of men in all the relations of life our Lord announced and explained the immutable and eternal principles of justice and mercy, but the application of these to individual cases he left to those whose business it is to administer both the Christian and the civil law. This man's request was prompted by his soul-consuming covetousness, for Jesus said to them, the multitude, "Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness," and on this subject gave them a short but heart-searching sermon—one needed in all times and at all places. The one sufficient reason that he gives why men should keep themselves from all covetousness is this, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." A man's life is from God and of God, but since its continuance in the physical body is conditioned

upon material blessings, many come to take the less for the greater, the means for the end. Here again our Lord tells us the secret of happiness. It is not in material possessions, but in spiritual qualities; not in the external so much as the internal. His illustration given is one of the most striking and significant of all his wonderful parables. A prosperous farmer had lived under the favor of the Lord until he became rich. He did not recognize the Giver of all good as in any way connected with his blessings. Within a few years the care of the enormous products of his fields became a problem with himself. After due consideration, he pulled down all of his old barns and replaced them with new buildings of greatly increased capacity. The smile of heaven continued to rest upon all of his wide and beautiful fields, but their owner still continued to forget God. The farmer is busy looking after his crops and in filling his big, fine barns. He was wholly absorbed in getting and keeping more and more and more. He had no time for anything else. After a while his storehouses were all full—the dream of years had become a tangible and visible re-

ality. Then in his proud self-reliance and self-consciousness he said to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." In these words the thoughts of years found voice. They had consumed his faith and love, his justice and mercy, his humanity and philanthropy, as a flame in the night consumes the fluttering moth. Through the years there had been little room in his heart for thoughts of God—now there is no room at all. My fruits and my goods are abundant for my ease and my needs and my merry-making for many years. But that bright day was followed by an awful night, for that night was to him the crack of doom. God said to him, "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" If men will not hear God in his love for their redemption, they must hear him when his judgment speaks for their condemnation. Neither behind the heaps of all the attractive fruits and grains that have grown from fair fields, nor the piles of all the yellow gold that has been dug out of the earth, can a soul hide himself from God.

The application of this sermon was in these words, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." The soul lives not upon grain or gold, but upon God. Then the Teacher continued his sermon to his disciples which had been thus interrupted.

7. Calamities and Judgments.

The foregoing discourse of our Lord had been addressed directly in part to his disciples and in part to the people. It was severe and full of rebuke. The sermon called up two instances in the memories of some of his hearers, and they at once invited his attention to these occurrences. The first was that certain Galilean zealots who had fought with soldiers of the Roman garrison in the temple court, and had not only been killed, but that by Pilate's order and direction the blood of these slain Galileans had actually been mingled with the blood of the regular temple sacrifices. In Jewish thought and feeling this was a shocking profanation, and they reasoned that the men who had died in that fight with Roman soldiers must have been in

their own sins the greatest of all Galileans, otherwise how could they have met such a deplorable end? To this reasoning and the conclusion Jesus spoke only one word, "Nay." Your conclusion that punishment for sins is primarily meted out in this life is wrong; suffering is not always necessarily penal; calamities are not always punishments. "Except ye repent, ye shall in like manner perish." Instead of inquiring so searchingly into the transgressions of others, inquire rather into your own sins; for divine mercy is available only to the penitent in heart.

Of similar import is the reference to the eighteen persons upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them—they were not offenders above all men who dwelt in Jerusalem. Solemn indeed was the repeated injunction of our Lord, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." "In like manner" and "likewise" indicate that Jesus spoke first of the national ruin; and it is a painful fact that some of those who heard these words from Jesus' lips were present in the last siege and assault of the holy city, and were by the Roman soldiers cut down in death when they

were engaged in the preparation of their sacrifices. These words of Jesus evidently also point to a spiritual ruin that was to be future, personal and without remedy.

In the parable of the barren fig tree the Teacher said, this nation, instead of producing the fruit of the Lord, is cumbering the ground; and yet in my ministry a gracious opportunity is afforded it; therefore return you to your God ere ye be cut down.

8. *Professional Mourners.*

Our Lord was by the seashore at Capernaum, when Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue in that city, came to him. He may have been one of the deputation who on a previous occasion had interceded with the Master on behalf of the centurion's servant; and, if so, he knew from observation something of his kindness and power. Now his own heart is burdened with painful anxiety, for his only daughter, a beloved child of twelve years of age, was very dangerously sick. When Jairus came to the presence of Jesus, he fell down at his feet and besought him much, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death;

I pray thee that thou come and lay thy hands on her that she be made whole and live." The answer of Jesus was to go with the distressed man. He was attended by his disciples and a thronging multitude that hindered his progress. Before they reached the residence some messengers met them, who said to Jairus, "Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Teacher any further?" When Jesus overheard this report, he said, "Fear not, only believe, and she shall be made whole." He wished to spare Jairus needless agony, and the only thing that he could now do was to trust the sympathy and power of Jesus. Arriving at the house, they met a tumultuous throng of people, many of whom were weeping and wailing greatly; also the hired mourners and flute-players who were smiting their breasts and lamenting the girl's decease. This scene was unbecoming sincere sorrow and the solemnity of death; so Jesus said, "Why make you a tumult and weep? The child is not dead, but sleepeth." Your tumult is out of place and your weeping is uncalled for, since the girl is not finally dead as you think she is. "But they laughed him to scorn, knowing

that she was dead." They insistently affirmed that the child was lifeless, and not merely asleep, and that Jesus was either mistaken or trifling with a solemn fact, and hence they ridiculed him. To them he spoke no further, but to the little body, now so still and peaceful, he said, "Maiden, arise. And her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately." Death is more responsive to his sovereign power than childhood's sleep to a mother's call. He is the Lord of life and personal trust in him restores

"The touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."

The frightful slayer is led as a captive at the chariot wheels of this triumphant Conqueror. When they saw the little girl walking before them, they were amazed with a great amazement.

9. *A Lawyer's Inquiry about Eternal Life.*

Here is met an honest lawyer. He asked, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" His question was not prompted merely by a wish to test Jesus' knowledge of the law,

nor by his curiosity, or feeling of self-righteousness. His inquiry came out of his sincere personal interest in the question. Jesus answered him, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" This was a most befitting reply, as much as to say, you are a student and a teacher of that law whose authority you respect and whose wisdom you love. What is the answer of this law to your question? How readest thou? The lawyer replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Coming from such a man, this was a remarkable reply. First, in his spiritual vision that led him to the all-inclusive precept to *love*—which encompasses believing and doing, hope and fear—the supreme affection of the soul for God, and a concern for others, measured by self-love. Second, the fact that the lawyer, passing by the Decalogue and the whole ceremonial order, should have brought together the two Scriptures, one from Deuteronomy and the other from Leviticus, that our Lord himself later cited as the two upon which hung all the

law and the prophets. So Jesus said to him, "Thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live." This conversation had proceeded so smoothly and harmoniously that it would seem that it should have closed here, but it did not. This lawyer had the law in his head, but not in his heart. When confronted with the divine obligation to love his fellowmen as he loved himself, he was nonplussed. Quite unintentionally, if not unconsciously, he had involved himself in a serious difficulty, and now wished to get himself out of this by throwing upon Jesus the explanation of the meaning of neighbor; hence he asked, "Who is my neighbor?" As a Jew he was frank to admit that he had no love for the Samaritans, and the Gentiles he counted as dogs. His question clearly showed a wrong condition of his heart, since love has no limit except its own inability to go further. Then Jesus spoke to him the parable of the Good Samaritan. As we are attracted and charmed by its simple beauty and potencies, one feels like forgiving the narrow selfishness of the lawyer that was the occasion of its utterance by the Teacher. Jesus answered his question, "Who is thy

neighbor?" by telling him to whom he should *be* neighbor. You are thinking about the object of your love as your neighbor—rather should you, who must show this love, consider the state of your own heart. This is the key to the parable. A certain man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among robbers, who fell upon him, stripped him of his money and clothing, beat him, and then left him at the place half dead. A priest first and a little later a Levite, returning homeward from their ceremonial duties in the temple, each came to the place, saw the suffering man, and passed by on the other side of the road. Both should have been prompted to show pity, but both were negligent of the commonest duties of humanity. Then there came along a certain Samaritan, one of those people whom you Jews despise, who had compassion on the unfortunate traveler, promptly gave him the much-needed attention and cheerfully provided for his care until he should recover. "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?" The lawyer could make but one answer, "He that showed mercy on him." But

his inveterate prejudice kept the despised word out of his mouth. Neighborliness is determined, not by race, or sect or even by nationality, but by humanity. And thus Jesus taught how one loves his neighbor as himself. "Go, and do thou likewise."

10. *A Superior Young Man about Our Lord's Claims upon Him.*

As in the foregoing instance, the inquiry here is also relative to eternal life. The inquirer was a young man, rich, moral, a ruler, with a good opinion of himself, and yet withal having admirable elements of character. As Jesus was going on his way this young man came eagerly running to him, and, humbly kneeling before him, said, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He was depending upon his own moral excellencies, reached by his own persistent efforts, and some additional virtue yet to be learned and similarly attained, for eternal life. He regarded Jesus as a superior religious teacher and a man of blameless life, and hence capable of giving him the desired information. Jesus said to him, "Why callest thou me

good? None is good save one, even God." You consider me as only a man and call me good, but no one is absolutely good but God; so, if you attribute that quality to me, you should regard me as divine. Besides, the question that you ask is about eternal life, and hence can be satisfactorily answered only by one whose knowledge embraces eternity, that is God. It was necessary that this young man should first have the right conception of the nature of this Teacher. He asked what good thing he should yet do in order to his inheriting eternal life. Jesus replied, "Keep the commandments." He asked, "Which?" As a Jew living under the law he was directed to the law. Our Lord quoted to him five precepts of the Decalogue, substituting for the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The young man replied, "Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth up; what lack I yet?" All of his moral attainments failed to satisfy his conscience. He felt the lack of something, and asked the Teacher what that thing was. Jesus, looking upon him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing thou lackest; go, sell whatsoever

thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." What a hard thing to do that was! A young man, clean and capable, sincere and frank, rich and held in esteem by his associates, with beautiful dreams and bright hopes for the future, is required to sell all his possessions, give the proceeds to the poor, and then to follow this propertyless rabbi! It was too much for him, and so, "his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one that had great possessions." His trust was in his treasures and his heart was held fast by his possessions. He appreciated this Teacher and was attracted by his fine personality; and so he went away from him with feelings of sadness and sorrow. His money was the idol of his soul, for it is so hard to have large property without yielding to it the greater love. On the one hand, riches, with ease and honor, opportunity and privilege, place and pleasure—all that the human heart so seeks and seizes upon in the Now—and on the other hand, poverty, self-denial and self-abnegation, toil and obscurity, and the loss of self in passionate love for others,

with the end Eternal Life—such was the alternative offered by the Teacher to this man. And what ambitious soul reads these words without being called through his deepest emotions to his own supreme battle for life? The Master asks the absolute subjection of the heart to himself.

11. *Governor Pilate about the Kingship of Jesus.*

Covetousness betrayed Jesus, envy delivered him up, perjury bore false witness against him, cruelty crowned him with thorns, barbarity scourged him, and moral cowardice sentenced him to be crucified. The Sanhedrim had found Jesus guilty of blasphemy, because he said he was the Son of God, and had condemned him to death. Under the direction of the chief priests, scribes and elders, with his hands tied behind him and a rope around his neck, he was led by the Jewish police into the judgment hall, where he first met Pontius Pilate, and stood before the governor. The pretorium or judgment hall was a large room in Herod's palace which was the official residence and business office of the governor when

in Jerusalem. An elevated platform in front of the palace was called the pavement, and on this pavement there was a bench called the judgment-seat. Only some representatives of those who prosecuted the case went into the judgment hall. The most of them stood outside about the pavement, for to enter the palace of a heathen governor would defile them so they could not eat the Passover. Pilate went out and said to them, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" They cunningly replied, "If he were not a malefactor we would not have delivered him up unto thee." The governor soon surmised that the grievance of the complainants was religious, and not political in its nature; so he said to them, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." They replied, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." We have already found him worthy of death, but since, under the government of Rome we have no authority to execute the sentence, we now only ask your official sanction of our verdict. The charge was so vague that Pilate would not yet consent to confirm their conclusion. Then the accusers shifted and said, "We found this man

perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that he himself is Christ a King." These charges involved conspiracy, sedition and treason; hence Pilate was compelled to investigate the case. However, instead of "perverting our nation," he had toiled with tireless patience to convert it to God, while their second charge, that he forbade his people to pay the Roman taxes was a positive falsehood, and both of these the governor wholly ignored. He re-entered the judgment hall and asked Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Had Jesus said "Yes," he would thereby have acknowledged the charge of treason; had he said "No," he would have denied his spiritual kingship; so Jesus answered him, "Thou sayest." *You* speak the truth in saying that I am. Looking at his singular and strange prisoner, Pilate decided that from him his own government had nothing to fear; so he said to the chief priests and the multitude, "I find no fault in this man." Meanwhile the leaders were working up the mob-madness in the crowd. After all, they asked themselves, are we to lose our case? It must not be. In hot fury they accused the prisoner of

many things, but Jesus was now silent. So Pilate again asked him, "Answerest thou nothing? Behold how many things they accuse thee of." "And he gave him no answer, not even to one word; insomuch that the governor marveled greatly." The accusations were all false and malicious, so obviously so as to be the prisoner's vindication. But that a man on trial for his life, and prosecuted by powerful enemies, should shut his lips in absolute silence greatly perplexed the presiding judge. In the accusations reference had been made to Galilee, and Pilate, aiming to rid himself of this troublesome case, sent his prisoner to Herod, the governor of that province, and at that time in Jerusalem.

But with that man our Lord exchanged no words, either of agreement or disagreement. Herod Antipas was the one and only man on all the earth that Jesus refused to speak to. That bloated sensualist and devilish wretch even the Son of God could not help.

Returned again to Pilate's judgment hall, the governor again asked Jesus, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" This was the one question that enlisted the judge's interest, for if Jesus claimed to be a king, in a political sense it was

his duty to examine and pass judgment on the case; but if Jesus was a king in some merely religious way, the claim did not come under his jurisdiction. This was fundamental. The answer of Jesus did not make the subject clear to the judge's thought, "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?" Had not the prisoner already answered this question, or, rather, helped the judge to answer it for himself? Does the judge now join the prosecution to inveigle Jesus into some criminal admission. With proud scorn Pilate replied, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me; what hast thou done?" Jewish questions of religion Pilate did not care to understand nor try to adjudicate, but Jesus was charged with high treason, and from the testimony of the prosecution the judge could not decide; hence he asked Jesus what he had done to bring him to his present position. His reply was, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." Pilate reasoned, the kingdom of this visionary is assuredly a very shadowy

affair; his servants will not fight against his enemies to hinder his being delivered up for trial and condemnation, so they will probably not use force to establish his government at any time; indeed, this harmless dreamer appears to have quite willingly surrendered himself. I can not see how any opposition can come to the imperial authority from such a king and with such non-fighting followers! Had the case not involved a serious official responsibility for Pilate, it would doubtless have appealed to him as ludicrously melodramatic; so he said, "*Thou art a king then!*" This poor, friendless, unattended, hand-bound, halter-led prisoner on trial for his life, a king! thought Pilate. But the prisoner's mien was still majestic and his words so wonderful. "*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*" The kingdom of our Lord is the mighty empire of truth—the eternal realities. His conquests are not by material but by moral agencies, and its firstfruits are spiritual, and not political. His palace is built of the souls of his willing subjects, while

his throne is made of hearts filled with a quenchless love. With mingled perplexity and despair the governor asked, "What is truth?" and went out to say to the Jews, "I find no crime in this man." His war of words was continued with the Jews until he had four times declared the prisoner guiltless, but finally yielded and "gave sentence that what they asked for should be done." So Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate," and thus this truckling official and obsequious self-seeker won his crown of fadeless infamy. But Jesus "for the suffering of death was crowned with glory and honor." He shall have dominion from sea to sea and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

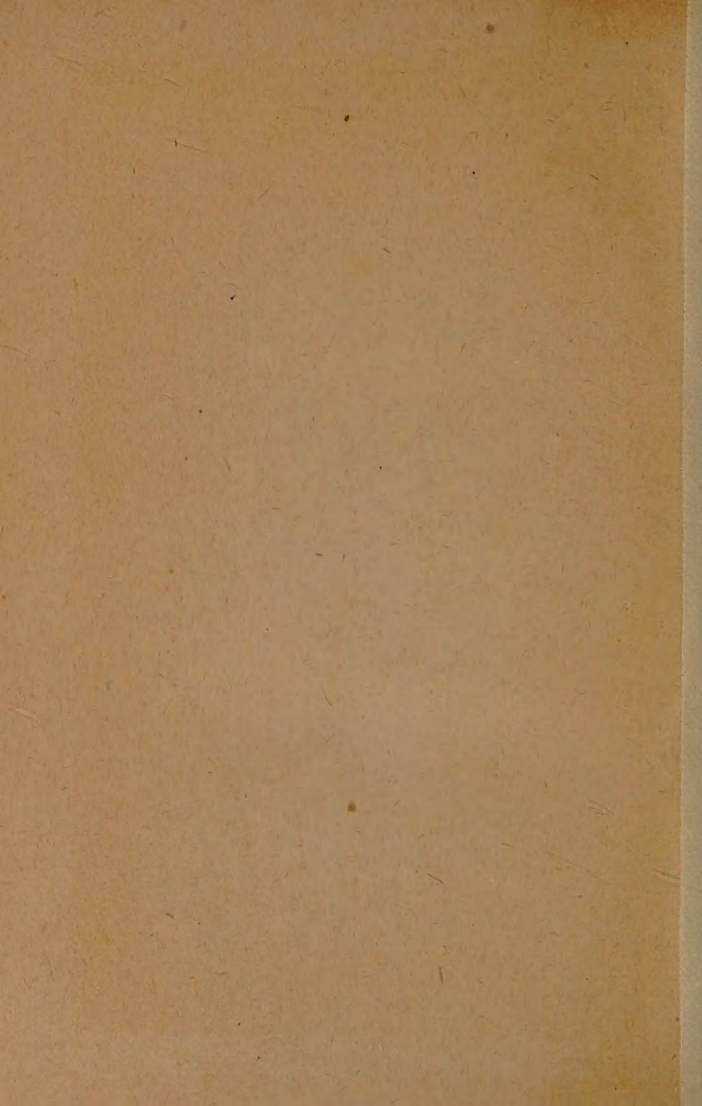
Merciful and mighty Redeemer, rule thou in us until it shall please thee that we shall reign with thee.

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